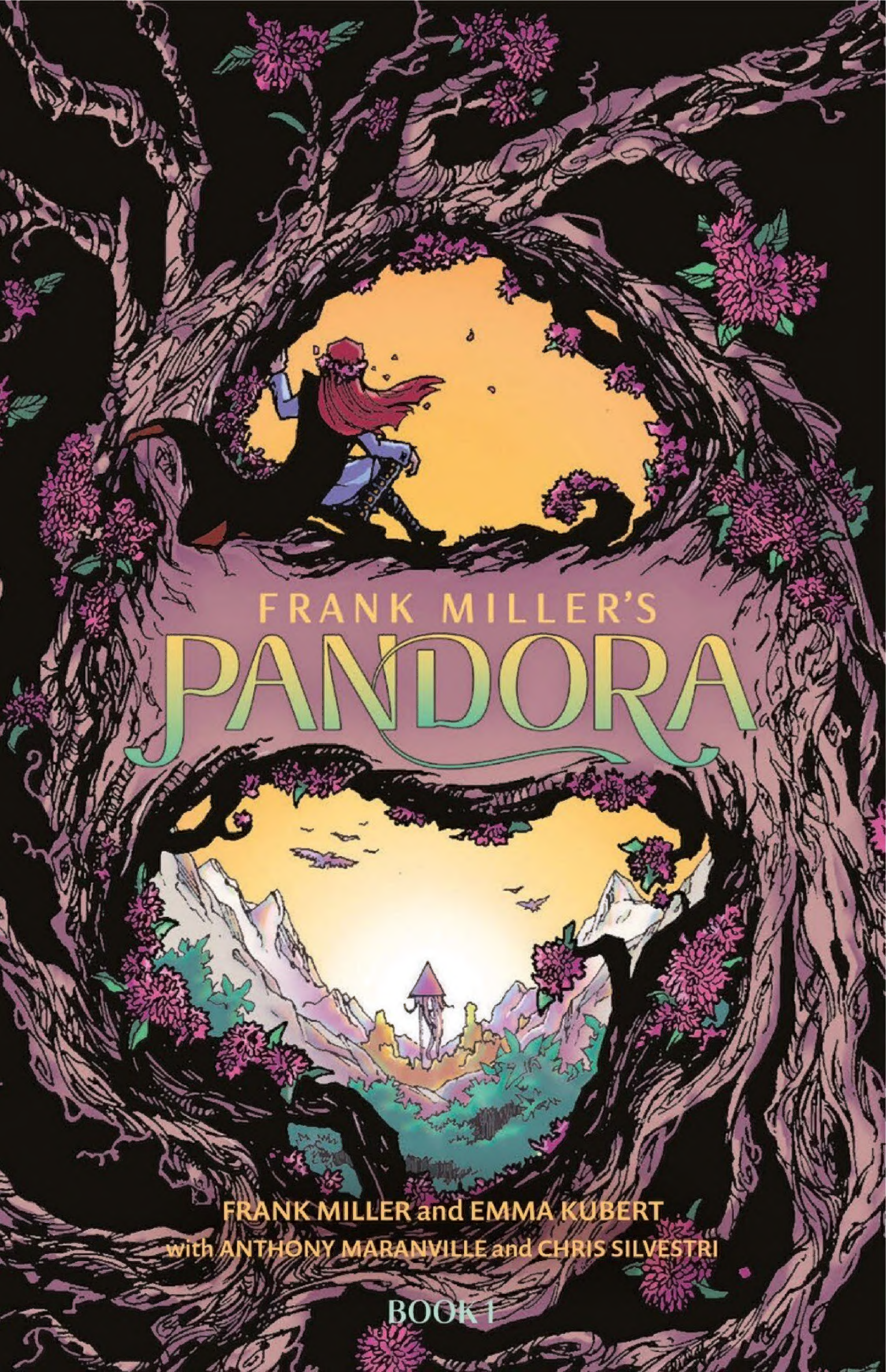
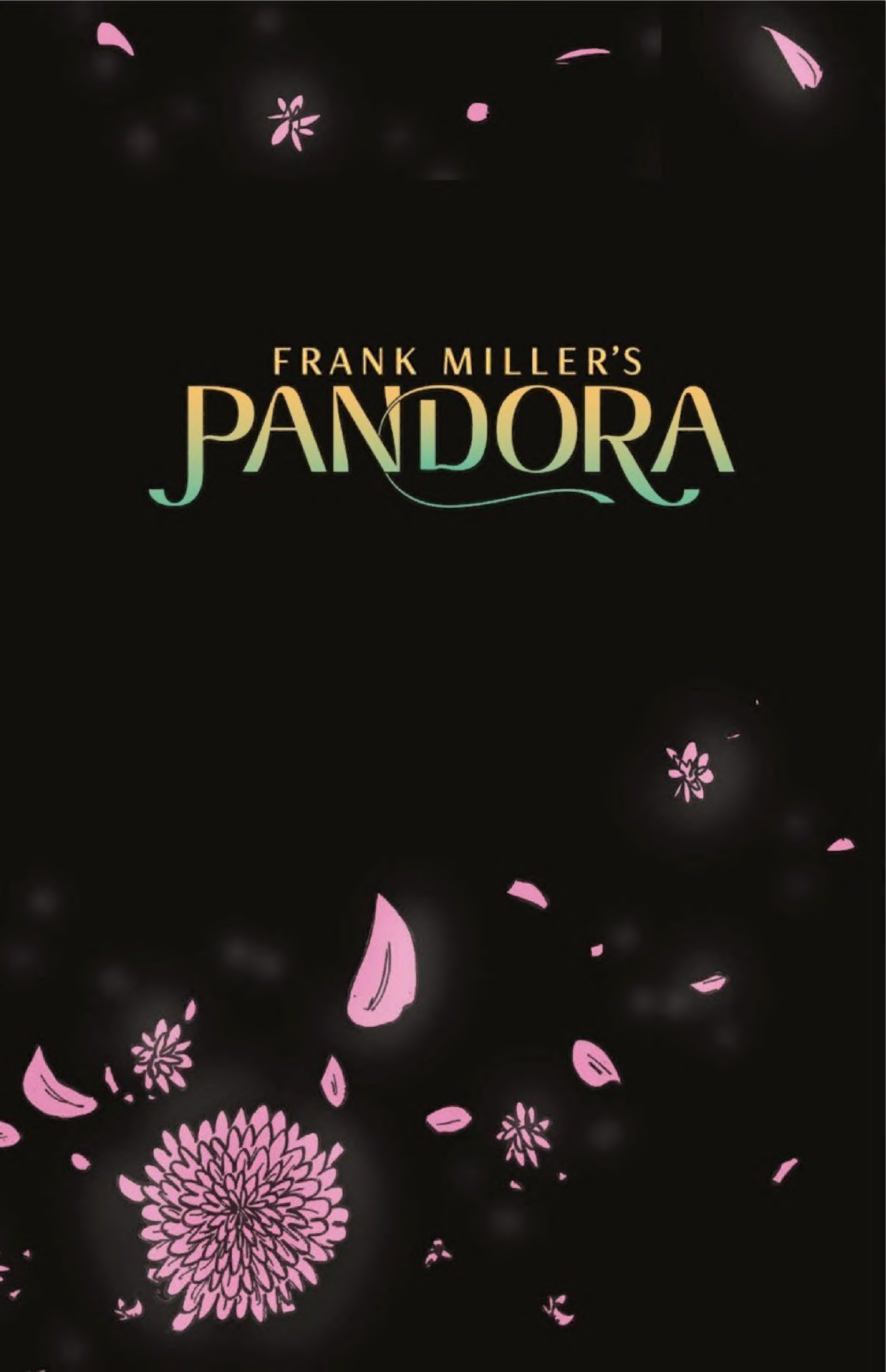

FRANK MILLER'S
PANDORA
FRANK MILLER and EMMA KUBERT
with ANTHONY MARANVILLE and CHRIS SILVESTRI
BOOK 1


FRANK MILLER'S
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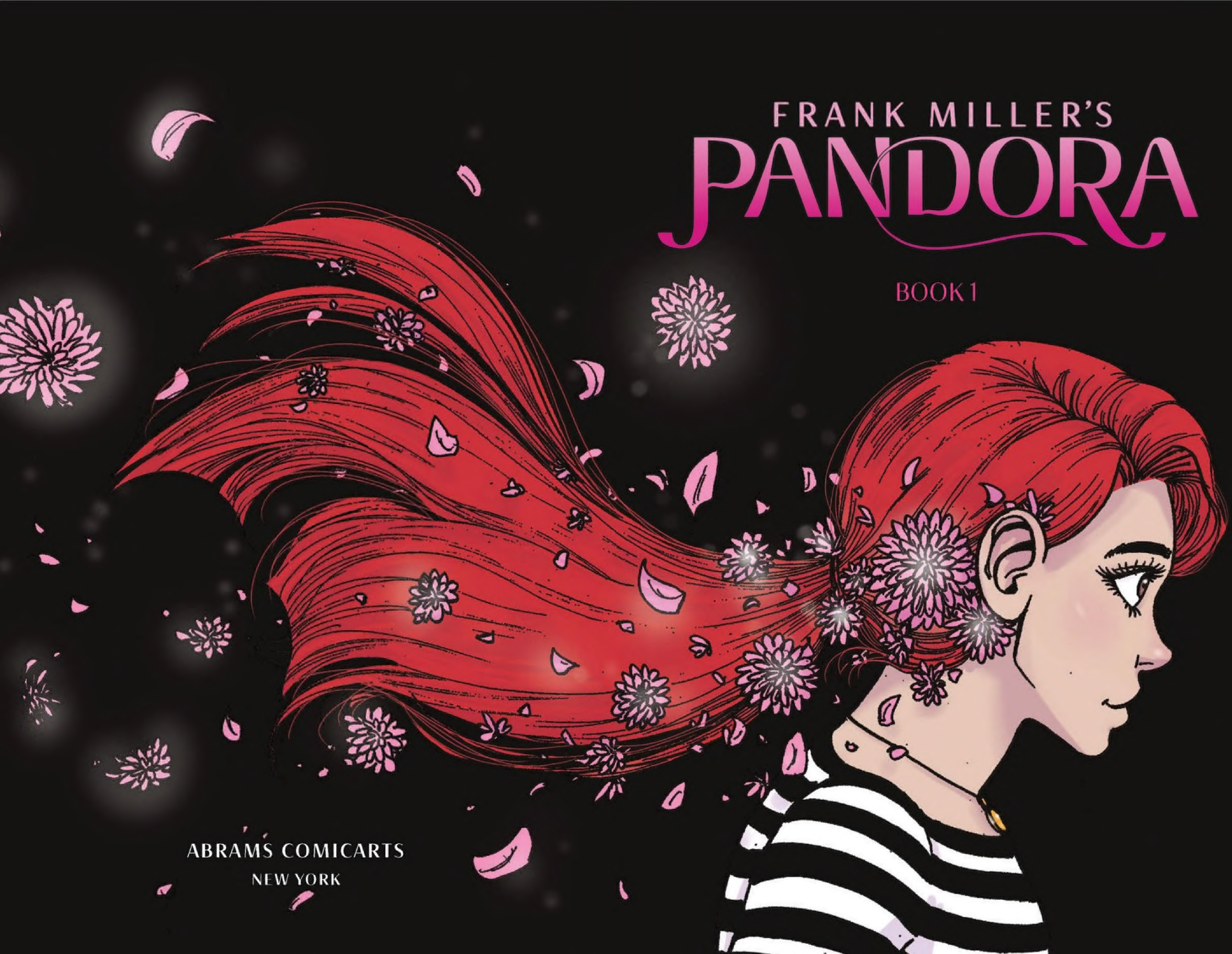
PANDORA

BOOK 1



ABRAMS COMICARTS
NEW YORK

They wait.

ONE
EMMA KUBERT

They haunt the *fiber* of all things.

THEY'RE HERE!
THEY'RE HERE!
THEY'RE RIGHT OUTSIDE!
HEAR 'EM EVERYWHERE!
HEAR 'EM EVERYWHERE!
HUFF HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
SKFEK
HUFF
HARD WORK
HUFF

KEEP TUNNELING! KEEP TUNNELING!
WE MUST FLEE!
NO! WE MUST STAND OUR GROUND AND FIGHT!
WE ARE FOOLS! WE LED THEM RIGHT TO US!
JUST LISTEN TO THEM--
--ALL ROUND US--
LORD HOZ, THE SITO ARE IN THE FIRST CHAMBER! WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME!
WE ARE SURROUNDED-- ON EVERY SIDE!
WE ARE DOOMED! DOOMED!

WE SEAL IT HERE!
WE SEAL IT HERE!
NO! NOT SAFE!
IT'S NOT SAFE!
ALL UNSTABLE!
SET TO POP!
EYE'S ALL UNSTABLE!
HISSSSSSS
PULL IT OUT PULL IT OUT
PULL IT OUT THE EYE IT'S GONNA SHUT ON YOU--
ALL YOUR FAULT ALL YOUR FAULT ALL YOUR FAULT--
HERE NOW, MY LORD.
WHAT IS THIS THING, I ASK?...

WHAT IS IT?
HOW MANY HAVE DIED TO POSSESS IT--
--AND HOW CAN SOMETHING SO SMALL AND WEIGHTLESS CARRY WITHIN IT THE FATE OF SO MANY SOULS?
THERE'S A HIDDEN EYE IN THE NEXT CHAMBER! I'LL TAKE IT THROUGH.
STEADY, NOW.
HERE BE MONSTERS.

NO! WE GO TOGETHER. NO ONE CAN BE LEFT ALONE WITH THE RELIC.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THE EYE IS STABLE, BOY?
I'VE BEEN THROUGH IT BEFORE...
YOU MUST GO! THEY'VE BREACHED THE MAIN CHAMBER.
FOLLOW ME!
SHUT THE EYE BEHIND US.
LEAVE THE ENEMY NO ADVANCE--
--AND US-- NO RETREAT.
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
EAT THEM!
BE BRAVE, MY FRIENDS.
BE STRONG.

WE ARE ONLY DOOMED IF THEY DISCOVER THE HIDDEN EYE.
PREPARE FOR BATTLE.
"BATTLE"?
"BATTLE"?
JUST LOOK AT YOU COWERING, CHITTERING, CHATTERING RODENTS--
--YOU PRESUME TO BATTLE?
OH, NO. OH, NO.
A PREDATOR DOES BATTLE.
FOR THE PREY, THERE IS ONLY DEATH.
HSSSSSS

CREEEEE!!!
Somewhere else altogether.
Somewhere much nicer.
Just then.

CLICK-CLACK!
CREEE!!!
OHMYGODIT'SYOU.

IT'S YOU!
YOU'RE BACK!
WRBL
I THOUGHT YOU'D FLOWN OFF FOR GOOD!
STAY RIGHT THERE. STAY RIGHT THERE.
GOOD GIRL. GOOD GIRL.
BEAUTIFUL GIRL. BEAUTIFUL GIRL.
ANNABETH! GET IT OUTTA BED! I NEED HELP CLEANING THE RUBY ROOM! WE GOT A NEW BOARDER COMING TODAY! MOVE IT!
BANG! BANG!

CREEEE!
YES, MOTHER.
COMING MOTHER.
All they ever do is steal stuff and do drugs.
And all I do is whatever they tell me to do.
Is this gonna be my whole life?
There's got to be another way--
--a better way...
...somewhere...
CLICK!

...but not *here*.
Not today.
THERE YOU ARE, SLEEPY HEAD!
TAKE OVER ON THE *EGGS*, WILL YOU.
HOW LONG THOSE FOLKS *STAYING?* YOU SAID...
DON'T START WITH ME. IF YOU CAN FIND A BETTER WAY TO MAKE MONEY, *I'M ALL EARS.*
YOU WANT *CHIVES* WITH THAT, MRS. FINCH?
YOU ARE SUCH A *SWEET* LITTLE ANGEL, AND LOOK AT YOU, COOKING LIKE A BIG OLD GROWN-UP.
HOW OLD WOULD YOU *BE*, DARLING?
JUST FIFTEEN, MA'AM.
Going on *fifty*, it feels like.

A wet-gravel chuckle.
JUST FIFTEEN.
NOT A GIRL, NOT REALLY, NOT ANYMORE--
My skin crawls.
My throat goes all dry.
My stomach lurches from the rotten-fish stink of him.
It's Meeks.
--NO, NOT NO GIRLIE NO MORE-- BUT NO WOMAN, NEITHER, NOT JUST YET.
NOT JUST YET.

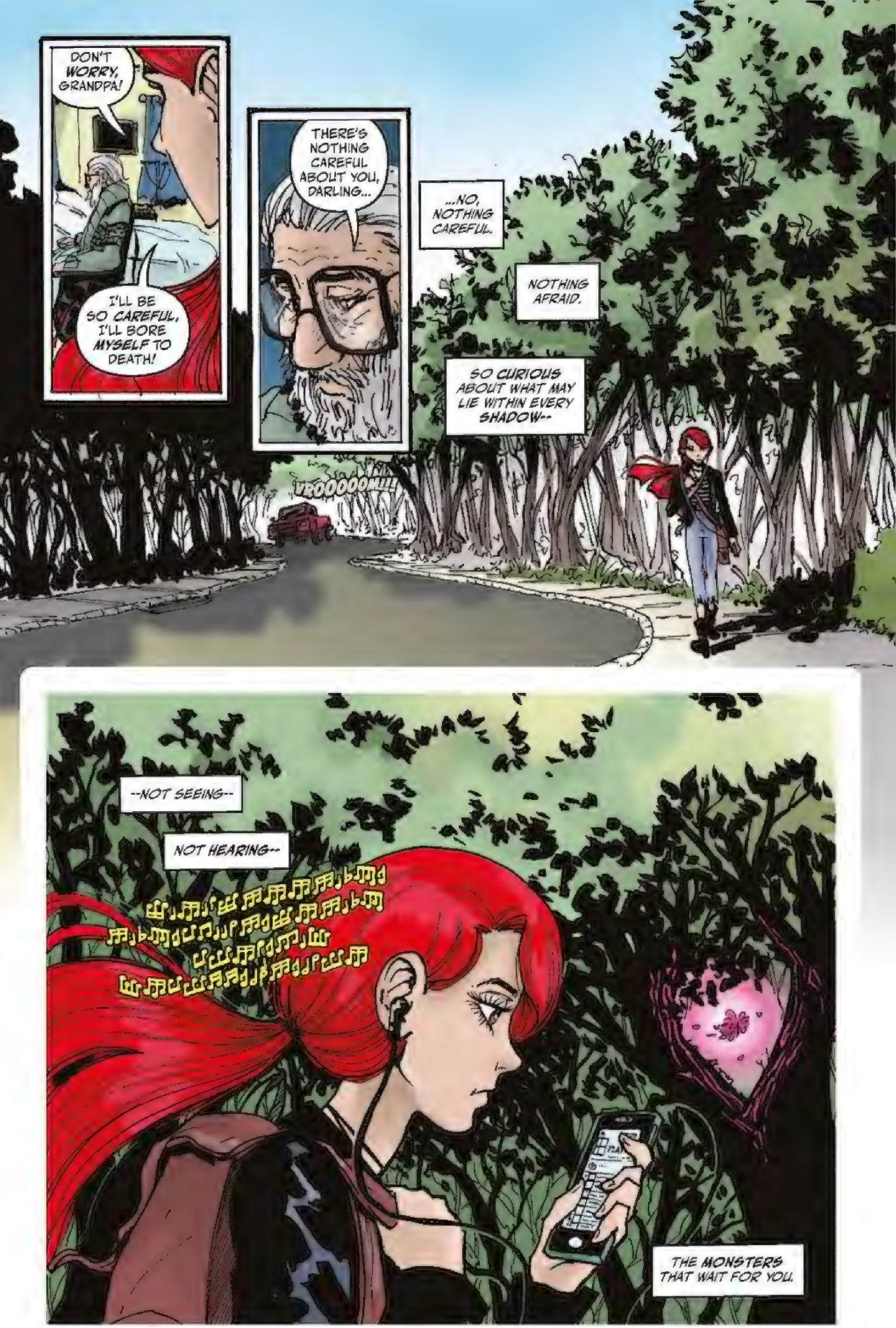
Guests.
They sit.
They talk.
They eat.
They never even think about helping out.
Then there's Meeks.
HEY-- I WAS JUST UPSTAIRS, Y'KNOW, RUMMAGING AROUND--
--AND ANNA-BEE, YOU KEEP BUSY!
WHAT-- THOSE--
YOU BEEN HOLDING OUT ON US, HONEY!
YOU'RE A REGULAR PEE-CASSO, WAY YOU DRAW!
GIVE THAT BACK!
AW, HONEY-- A TALENT LIKE YOURS HAD GOTTA BE SHARED WITH THE WORLD! AND BESIDES...
...THOSE DIARY NOTES OF YOURS ARE GONNA BREAK THEIR HEARTS!

IF HE TOUCHES HER I WILL END HIM. IF HE TOUCHES HER I WILL END HIM.
ARGGG
HAND IT OVER! GIVE IT TO ME!
HHHH!
HA! HA! HA!
BUT YOU GOTTA SHARE! THAT BIT ABOUT THE CUTE SHEPHERD BOY-- IT'S GONNA BREAK THEIR HEARTS!
HA! HA! HA!
STOP IT MEEKS! GIVE IT BACK!
RELAX. I WAS JUST RUNNING A PRANK.
YOU GO IN HER ROOM AGAIN, YOU'RE OUT OF HERE!
KEEP YOUR DOOR LOCKED.
IT WAS LOCKED!
CHECK ON GRANDPA BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR SCHOOL.

THE TERN-- IT CAME BACK, GRANDPA.
IT'S LIKE WE'D MADE FRIENDS.
I SAW IT. THAT'S A WONDERFUL OMEN, KIDDO! YOU KNOW THEY MIGRATE LONGER THAN ANY OTHER BIRD? THEY TRAVEL OVER FIFTEEN THOUSAND MILES TO THE ANTARCTIC AND BACK EVERY YEAR. THAT'S FIFTEEN THOUSAND WHOLE MILES.
REMARKABLE CREATURES. REMARKABLE.
THEY JUST FLY AWAY.
I WISH I COULD DO THAT...
NEVER FORGET, CHILD--
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
CREAK!
HERE.
TAKE A LOOK.

BACK WHEN I WAS A YOUNGSTER-- IN MY ADVENTURING DAYS--
--WHEN I WAS JUST THEN COURTING YOUR GRANDMA, WELL...
...I WENT AND TOOK HER TO WHERE THE TERNS NESTED.
WON HER HEART RIGHT THEN AND THERE!
AND THIS MAP YOU DREW UP--
--IT SHOWS EVERYTHING!
NESTS OF FLYING SQUIRRELS...
...FISH SPLASHING OUT OF WATER AND SCRAMBLING ACROSS THE GROUND LIKE FROGS...
..AND TERNS-- TERNS, RUNNING IN PACKS...
I'M GOING OUT THERE.
YOU AREN'T GOING OUT THERE.

THEY'LL EAT YOU ALIVE, THOSE THINGS.
THINGS?
WHAT THINGS?
THINGS.
I'VE SEEN THINGS, OUT THERE. BAD THINGS.
THINGS THAT EAT EACH OTHER--
--AND THINGS THAT EAT PEOPLE.
=GULP!=
BUT GRANDPA-- HOW'D YOU GET OUTTA THERE ALIVE?
BY KNOWING THINGS.
THINGS THAT NO MAN SHOULD EVER KNOW.
ANNABETH!
YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE. DID GRANDPA TAKE HIS PILLS?
YEAH, I TOOK MY DUMB PILLS!
ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT ME LIKE I'M NOT HERE...
I'M HEADING OUT! LOTS TO DO!


DON'T WORRY, GRANDPA!
I'LL BE SO CAREFUL, I'LL BORE MYSELF TO DEATH!
THERE'S NOTHING CAREFUL ABOUT YOU, DARLING...
...NO, NOTHING CAREFUL.
NOTHING AFRAID.
SO CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT MAY LIE WITHIN EVERY SHADOW--
VROOOOOM!!!
--NOT SEEING--
NOT HEARING--
THE MONSTERS THAT WAIT FOR YOU.

Monsters.
?
They don't *all* have *spiked tails.*
They don't all have *forked* tongues or *razor teeth.*
Some of them drive *trucks.*
VROOOOOM!!!
PULL IN *TIGHT--*
PULL IN *TIGHT--*
Some of them smile and giggle.
Sweet as sunshine.
BOMBS AWAY!

SPLAAAAASSSSSH!!!!
YAAAA
I hate orange soda.
SCREEEEEECH!!!
I hate when I get sticky.
I hate this crowd.
YOU'LL BE LOOKING GOOD IN CLASS, ANNA-BEE!
HAHAHAHA!
RING!
I hate this town.

I hate everything.
I hate everything.
SO NICE OF YOU TO DROP BY, MS. DEAN.
SORRY.
=HUFF=
SORRY I'M LATE.
WHAT'S WRONG, HONEY? YOU'RE ALL WET AND STICKY.
HAHAHA!
THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH, YOUNGSTERS. WE'RE NOT HERE TO ENJOY OURSELVES.
NOW-- WHO CAN TELL ME A KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROKARYOTIC AND EUKARYOTIC CELLS?
...YES? MS. JENKINS?
PROKARYOTIC CELLS DON'T HAVE BOUNDARIES.
I MEAN-- WHAT-YOU-CALL-ITS AROUND THEM.
MEMBRANES.
MEMBRANES. INDEED.
YOUR ANSWER, MY DEAR, WHILE INVENTIVE, IS PROFOUNDLY, INTRINSICALLY, AND EXISTENTIALLY INCORRECT.
WOULD ANY OF YOU OTHER PRODIGIES CARE TO HAZARD A GUESS?

MR. BROWN?
HOMEWORK
DUE 9/23
→ 10/01
→ 10/22
YES, MS. DEAN, GO AHEAD.
EUKARYOTIC CELLS HAVE A NUCLEUS AND MITO-CHONDRIA...
WHICH POWERS THE CELL. THEY SAY EUKARYOTIC CELLS EVOLVED FROM ONE PROKARYOTIC CELL ABSORBING ANOTHER.
YOU SEE, HONEY. COMPLEX LIFE IS ONLY POSSIBLE BECAUSE A SMART CELL ATE ITS DUMB ENEMY AND HARNESSED ITS POWER.
HAHAHA!
LET'S NOT BE SHAMING OUR CLASSMATES, MS. DEAN.

Below.
Far below.
Worms murmur of old times, ancient times—
--and of all the proud *giants* upon which they have *feasted.*
It is wet here.
Wet-- and sickly *warm.*
The air *sticks* to their throats.
Their *voices* do not *echo.*
THIS *PLACE.*
HAS IT A *NAME?*
NONE THAT IS REMEMBERED.
NOT BY THE *LIVING.*
MOVE *QUICKLY.*
THE RELIC ISN'T *SAFE* HERE.
Nothing is safe.
Not here.

HA!
THIS VAUNTED "FORBIDDEN ZONE" IS ONLY MADE FORBIDDEN--
--BY SPOOKY WORDS AND SCARY SLOGANS-- ALL BACKED UP BY NOTHING!
YOU MEAN... I DIDN'T DISCOVER THIS PLACE? IT WASN'T ME?
THE AIR'S TOO THIN UP THERE AROUND YOUR BRAIN, TALL ONE.
YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH BLOOD IN THERE TO THINK.

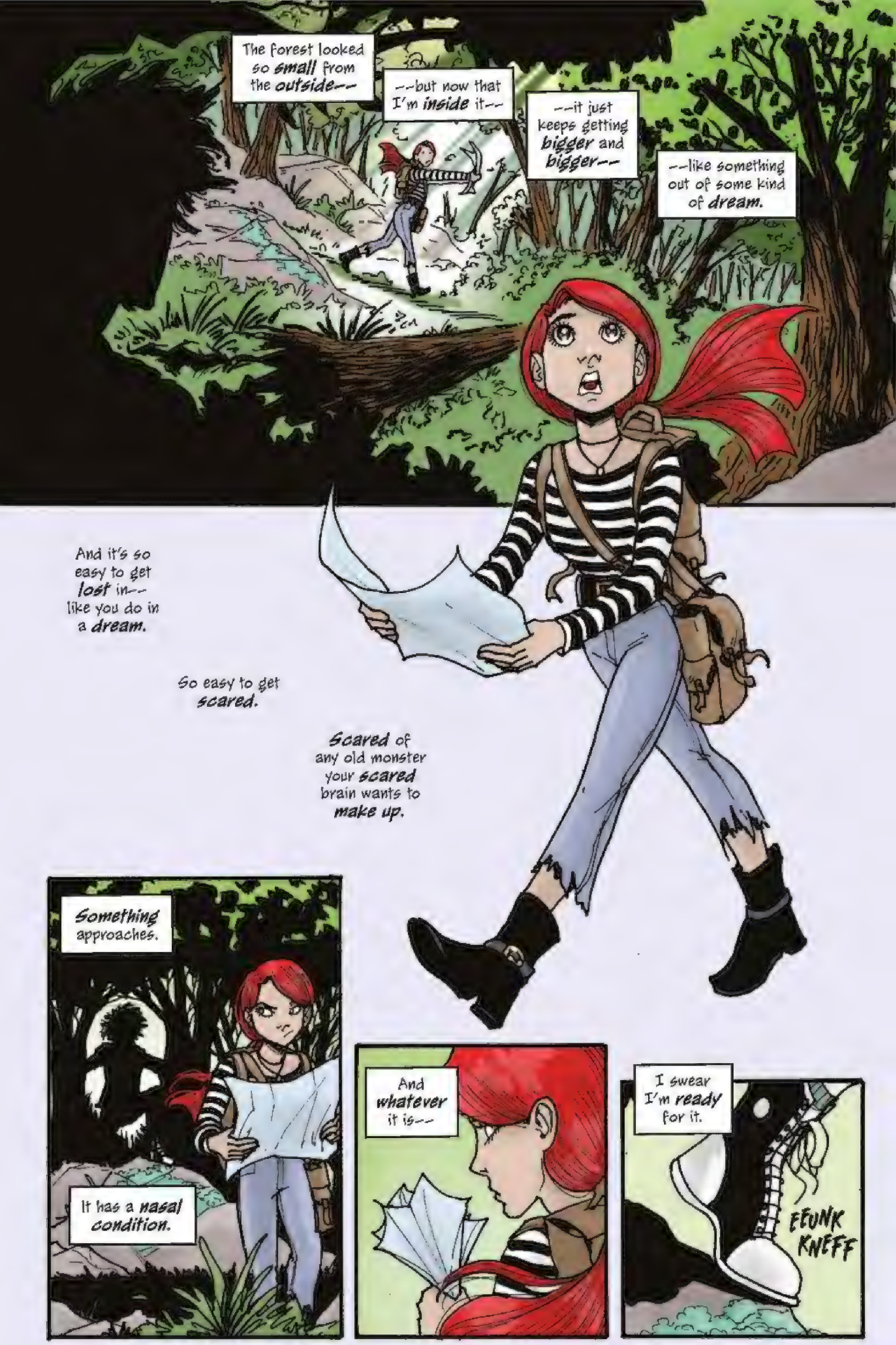
ENOUGH, HOZ. HE MADE A MISTAKE.
WE ARE ALL DRAWN TIGHT. OUR NERVES ARE SHOT.
IT WOULD BE TOO EASY A TIME TO MAKE MISTAKES.

MISTAKES?!
THE ZONE'S PROTECTIONS HAVE BEEN SHATTERED!
THE SITO-- THEY WILL FIND US! THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHAT WILL WE DO?
WILL WE BECOME WHAT WE MUST BECOME TO SAVE OUR HOMES AND OUR KIN--
--OR DO WE CAST DOWN A WELCOME MAT OF FLOWERS--
--AND SING OUT OUR GRATITUDE TO OUR NEW SLAVERS?

GIVE ME THE RELIC! GIVE IT TO ME!
I AM SORRY, MY LORD. I DID NOT KNOW.
WE'LL NEED SUPPLIES TO OPEN UP ANOTHER EYE. ONLY ONE OF US CAN GO.
I WILL GO. LET THIS BE MY *BURDEN.*
LET THIS BE MY *TRUST.*
LET THIS BE-- MY *REDEMPTION*-- AND MY FINAL *GLORY!*

The sacred stones... they'd chuckle, if they could.
They've heard all this before...
...yes, *every word,* they've heard it.
So many times.
Over so many centuries.
So many thousand centuries.
From so many, many voices.
So many million voices.
FEEL IT NOW! THE *RELIC*-- IT SHAKES THE *EARTH!*
IT SHAKES THE *SOUL...*

BRRIINNNG!
School's out.
Time to go home and get bossed around.
Or maybe... not so fast.
Can't hurt to look around.
All dark and mysterious and full of secrets that Grandpa only hinted about.
And terns.
The terns are supposed to be there, too.
Can't hurt to look around.
Long as I don't touch anything.
Can't hurt to look around.


The forest looked so *small* from the *outside*--
--but now that I'm *inside* it--
--it just keeps getting *bigger* and *bigger*--
--like something out of some kind of *dream*.
And it's so easy to get *lost* in-- like you do in a *dream*.
So easy to get *scared*.
Scared of any old monster your *scared* brain wants to *make up*.
Something approaches.
It has a *nasal condition*.
And *whatever* it is--
I swear I'm *ready* for it.
EEUNK KNEFF

WHO SENT YOU?
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHO ARE YOU?
WHO AM I?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
It's a creep!
No. No. Don't be all judgmental
Maybe he's just a nerd.
YAHHHHH!!!!
HELP-- HELP ME!
DON'T WORRY, I GOT IT!
KRASH!
IT?!
WHO'S GOT ME?

HEY!
LEGGO THAT MAP!
IT'S MY PROPERTY!
WHOA, LOOK AT THAT! IT'S THE WHOLE FOREST!
STUFF EVEN I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT!
WHAT ARE THE "SCREAMING TREES"?

DON'T WORRY. DON'T WORRY.
I'M NOT TRYING TO ROB YOU. I'M JUST A CURIOUS GUY.
THE NAME'S KNOX.

GIVE ME MY MAP.
TAKE IT EASY. YOU BROUGHT THE MAP, SURE--
BUT I'M THE ONE WHO KNOWS THE FOREST.
SO I'M THE ONE-- THE ONLY ONE-- WHO CAN READ THE MAP.

GIVE ME MY MAP!
ARE THERE MORE OF YOU? OR DID YOU COME ALONE?
THAT'S A CREEPY THING TO ASK SOMEONE.

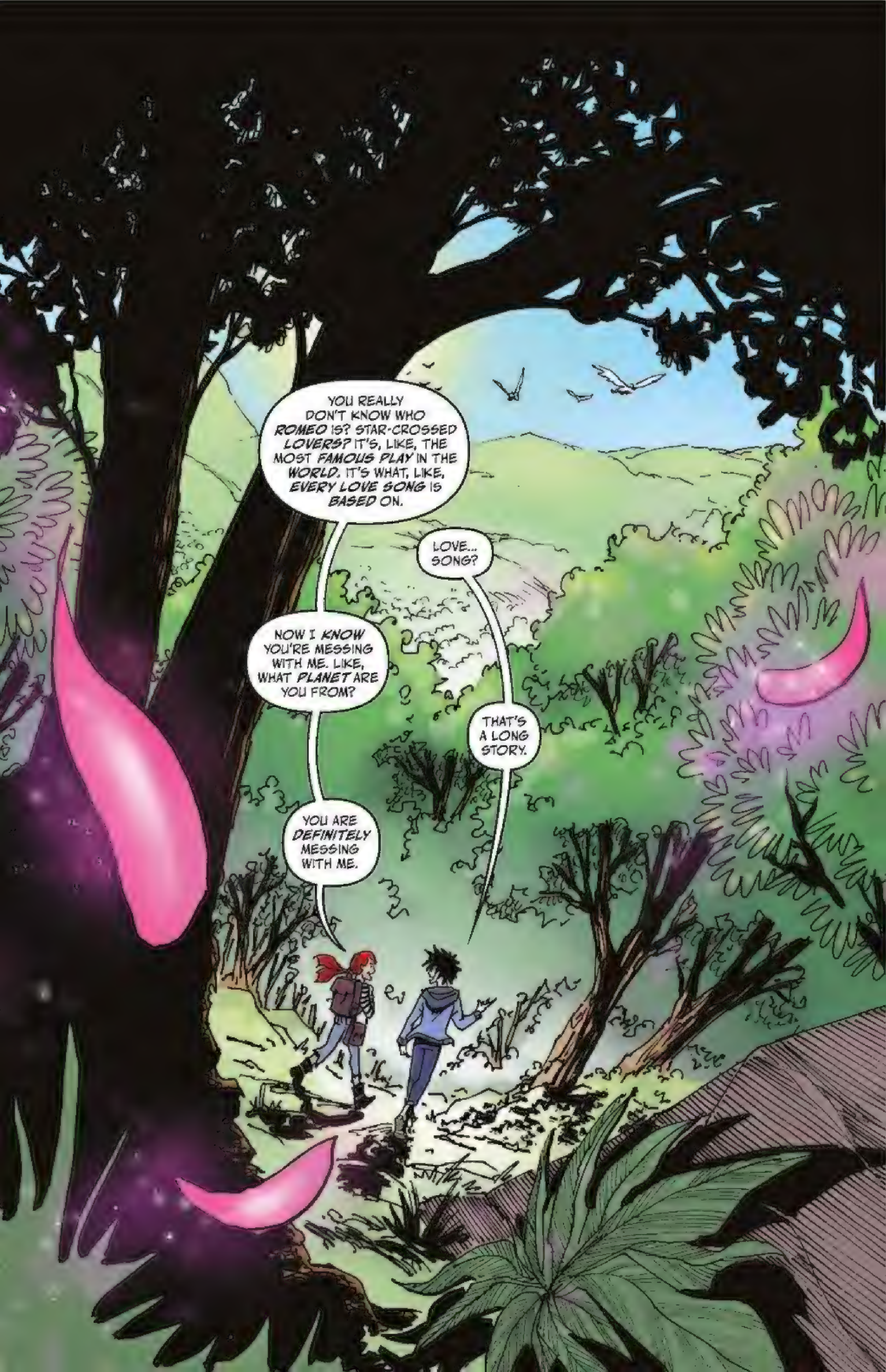
IT'S A GOOD THING THERE'S NOTHING CREEPY ABOUT ME, ISN'T IT?

SNATCH!!!
YOUR MAP IS WRONG.
MY MAP WAS DRAWN BY MY GRANDPA--
AND HE'S NEVER WRONG ABOUT ANYTHING.
The branches don't bend under him.
It's like he doesn't weigh a thing.
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU ARE SEEKING?
And that voice.
Like a laughing brook...
"WHAT IS IT THAT YOU ARE SEEKING?"
ARE YOU KIDDING ME? WHO TALKS LIKE THAT?
WAS I UNCLEAR?
FORGET IT... I'M LOOKING FOR A TERN NESTING GROUND MY GRANDPA TOLD ME ABOUT.
I CAN HELP YOU ON YOUR QUEST. AND INDEED I WILL.
UPON MY SACRED HONOR, I SO SWEAR.
Now that's just plain corny...

There's something magical about the way he just sits up there, light as a leaf---
---like he could just fly off...
Don't fly off.
Not just yet.
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND TOWN BEFORE. YOU NEW HERE?
I GUESS I'M NEW EVERYWHERE, REALLY.
SEEMS I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE BOUNCING FROM ONE PART OF THE PLANET TO ANOTHER.
YOU MIGHT CALL ME A RESTLESS SOUL-- SEEKING PERFECTION.
AND OCCASIONALLY-- JUST OCCASIONALLY-- I FIND IT!
A man of the world.
This guy just gets better.

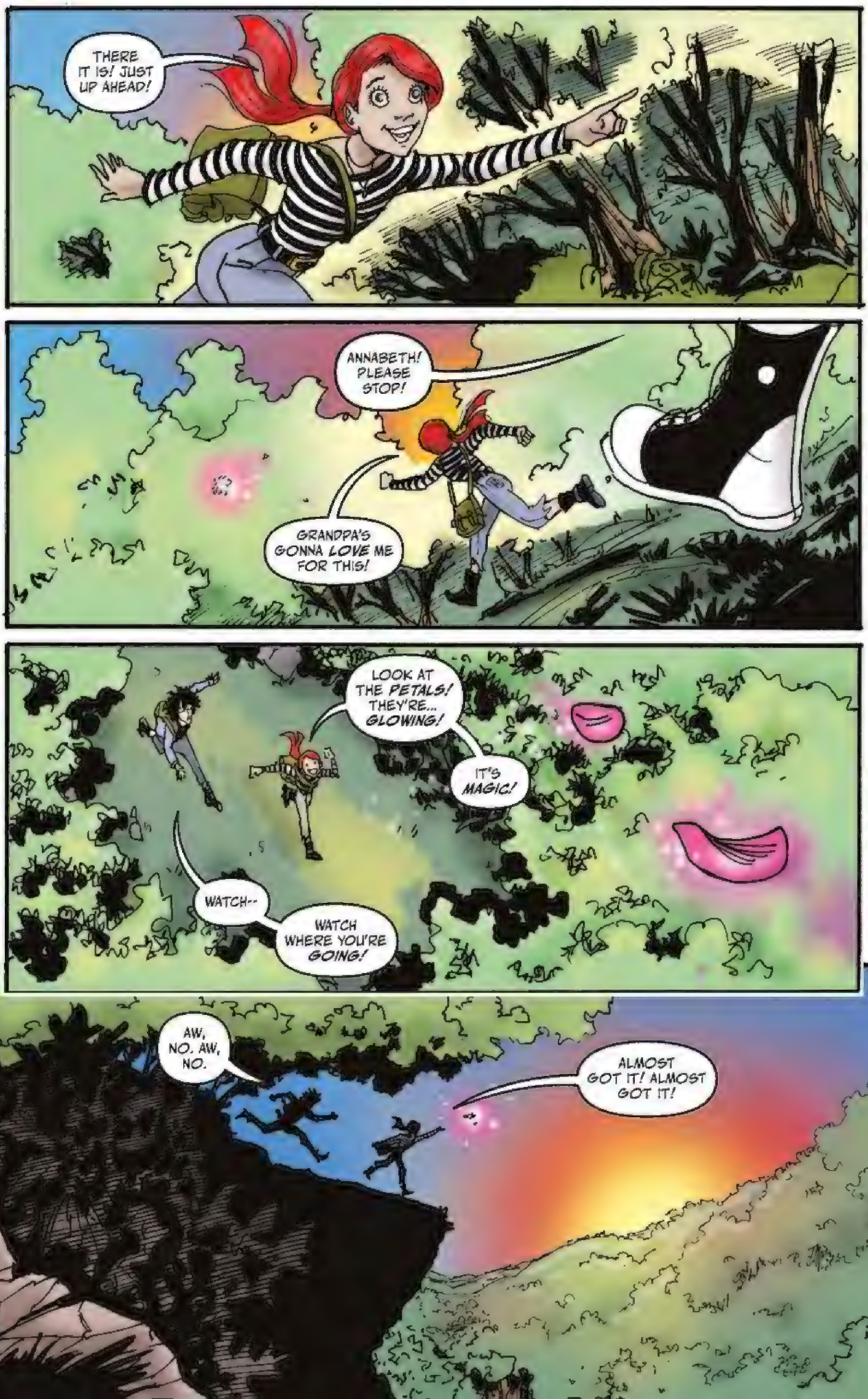
TELL ME, ANNABETH... WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?
SAY AGAIN?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT AM I? --
WHAT ARE YOU? DOING--
--OHMYGOD.
HAAAA!
I COULD'VE SWORN I KNEW MY PURPOSE, ANNABETH.
THEN YOU SHOWED UP.

WHERE YOU GOING?
HOW CAN I *HELP?*
YOU CAN'T. I'M BUSY.
AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF *DAYLIGHT.*
I DON'T *NEED* YOUR HELP.
I DON'T NEED ANYBODY'S HELP.
BUT *ANNABETH--*
I KNOW WHERE THE *NEST* IS.
DO YOU *REALLY?* OR IS THIS MORE OF YOUR ROMEO SCHTICK?
'CAUSE IF IT *IS,* I'M *TELLING* YOU...
WHAT IS... A *ROMEO?*
SOME KIND OF *COOKIE?*


YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHO *ROMEO* IS? STAR-CROSSED *LOVERS?* IT'S, LIKE, THE MOST *FAMOUS PLAY* IN THE *WORLD.* IT'S WHAT, LIKE, *EVERY LOVE SONG* IS *BASED* ON.
LOVE... SONG?
NOW I *KNOW* YOU'RE MESSING WITH ME. LIKE, WHAT *PLANET* ARE YOU FROM?
THAT'S A LONG STORY.
YOU ARE *DEFINITELY* MESSING WITH ME.

SO WHAT'S IT *LIKE* BACK WHERE *YOU'RE* FROM, KNOX?
PRETTY *AWFUL*, I GUESS YOU'D SAY.
SEEM'S *EVERYBODY'S* ALWAYS *FIGHTING* EVERYBODY *ELSE*.
TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT...
NOT MUCH MORE TO *TELL*.
IT'S ALL PRETTY *GHASTLY*.
YOUR TURN. I'VE NEVER *HEARD* ONE OF THOSE *LOVE* SONGS YOU MENTION.
SING ME ONE.
I'LL PLAY YOU ONE.
"PLAY"?
YEP!
MAGIC-- THIS IS *MAGIC!*
LIKE HEARING *ANGELS* SING!
TERNS MATE FOR LIFE. AND THOSE TWO ALWAYS CAME TO MY WINDOW. WHEN HE DIED, SHE KEPT COMING BACK.
IT IS A LOVE SONG.
WHOA.... DO YOU SEE THAT FLOWER?
IT'S *BEAUTIFUL*-- AND *WEIRD!*
IT'S NOTHING.
But there it *is*...

IT'S FLOATING OFF.
IT'S FLOATING AWAY.
BUT IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL.
BUT IT'S SO WEIRD.
WE CAN'T JUST LET IT GET AWAY!
WE CERTAINLY CAN!
ANNABETH-- YOU JUST CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF IN TO!
I SURE DON'T!--
AW NO--
--THAT'S WHAT MAKES THIS FUN!


THERE IT IS! JUST UP AHEAD!
ANNABETH! PLEASE STOP!
GRANDPA'S GONNA LOVE ME FOR THIS!
LOOK AT THE PETALS! THEY'RE... GLOWING!
IT'S MAGIC!
WATCH--
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
AW, NO. AW, NO.
ALMOST GOT IT! ALMOST GOT IT!

I GOT IT--

--I GOT IT--

CRAAACK!!!

YAHHHHH!!!!
GOTCHA!
OOMPH!
AH! OUCH!
HUFF HFF...
HUFF
ARE YOU OKAY...?
UH, I THINK SO?

WHOA... HEY. WE JUST, LIKE, ALMOST DIED.
SOUNDS RIGHT.
THINK I'LL GO PUKE.
WE ALMOST DIED.
COME ON, IT'S GETTING DARK.
BLARGG
BUT I CAUGHT IT.
I CAUGHT IT, KNOX.
I'VE GOT IT RIGHT HERE.
YOU TOUCHED IT.
YOU LITTLE FOOL.
NOW YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ME, ANNABETH. YOU HAND ME THAT FLOWER--
WHILE YOU STILL CAN--
AND BREATHE CAREFULLY... THROUGH YOUR MOUTH--
AND PRAY.
GOOD. THAT'S GOOD...
UH... I'D BETTER GET BACK HOME. MY MOM'S PROBABLY WORRIED.
SHE SHOULD BE--
--THE CHANCES YOU TAKE.

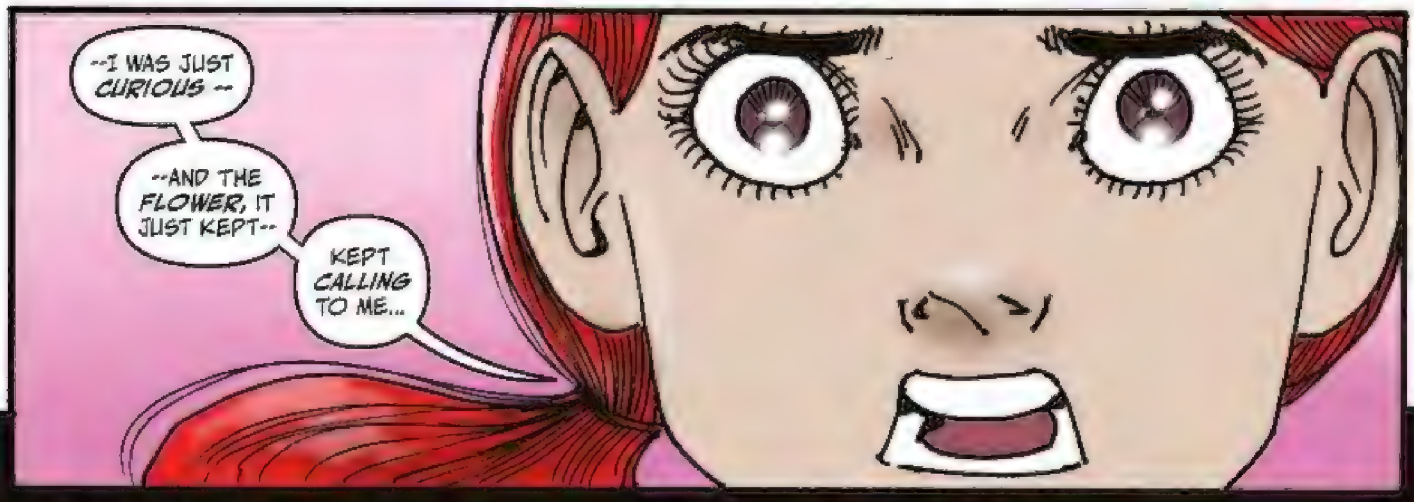
CAN'T BELIEVE WE GOT HERE SO FAST!
THE TIME JUST FLEW!
HOW NOT-- HE'S MAGIC...
THAT WOODEN STRUCTURE UP AHEAD --
THAT'S IT? THAT'S YOUR HOME?
YOU LIVE IN A BOX?
PLEASE TO FORGIVE MY INCESSANT INQUIRIES, ANNABETH. YOUR WORLD IS EXCEEDING STRANGE TO ME.
AND OH-- YOU MUSN'T FORGET YOUR SATCHEL.
TELL ME, MR. KNOX--
--IS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER FLIRTED WITH A GIRL?
WHY-EVER DO YOU ASK?
YOU SHOULD'VE KEPT HOLD OF THE BAG, DUMMY-- SO I'D COME RUNNING AFTER IT!
WHAT ABOUT ALL YOUR BELONGINGS?
THAT'S WHAT WOULD'VE MADE ME COME RUNNING.
YOUR WAYS ARE COMPLEX.

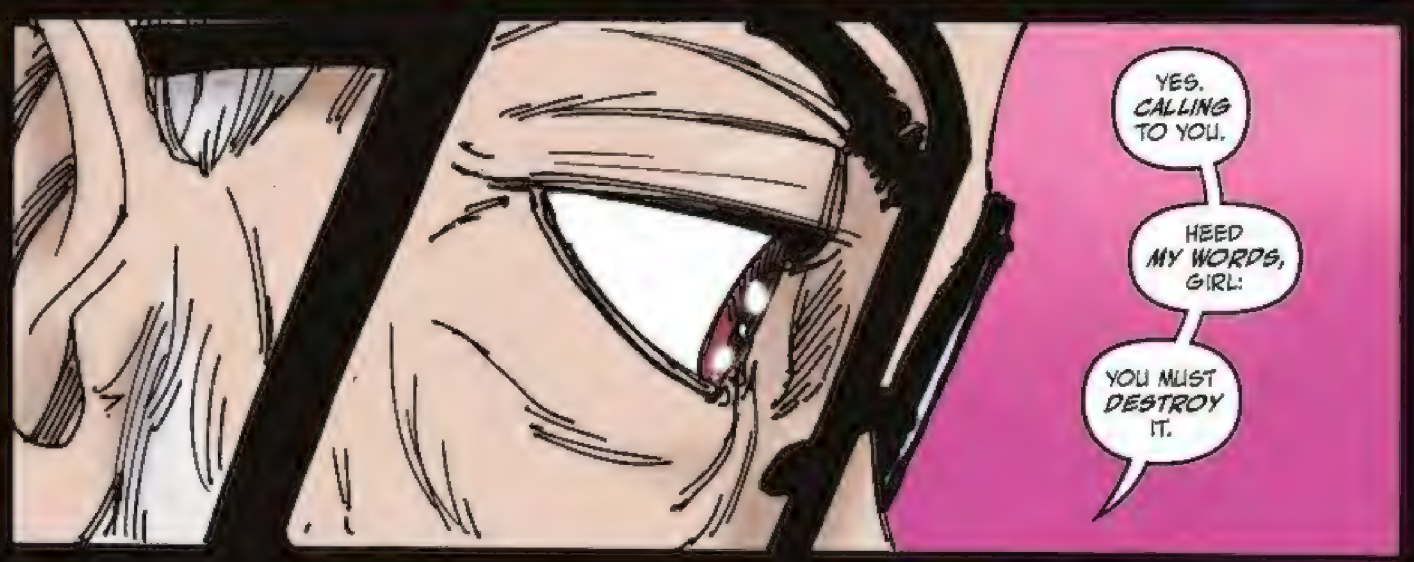
PERHAPS YOU WILL EXPLAIN THOSE WAYS TO ME, FAIR LADY--
ANON.
ANON.
SURE.
SO WHERE DO YOU STAY?
HERE AND THERE.
HE'S SO WEIRD...
...as again, we travel far below...
...we choke at acrid sulphur stink...
...we tremor as things large and small slither inside walls on every side...
...and we know that we are surrounded...
...and the Goblins bicker and fret...
THE RELIC'S INFLUENCE IS SPREADING FASTER THAN THE SYMBOLS FORETOLD. ITS POWER GROWS.
WHERE IS THE BOY? WHY HASN'T HE RETURNED?
...and just as swiftly... we flee this dreadful place...

...back to Annabeth -- and *home.*
Home.
It can't *always* have been like this...
HEY-- WHAT'S WITH THE *TRUCK* IN THE DRIVEWAY?
IT BELONGS TO MY BUDDY, TRUCKER JIM.
I'D STEER CLEAR OF HIM, IF I WAS YOU.
THANKS FOR THE WARNING.
SAY, YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT DRAWING THEM BIRDS. YOU EVER TRY DRAWING A MAN?
I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO MODEL FOR YOU.
YOU PATHETIC DRUNK! YOU MAKE ME SICK!
YOU MAKE *EVERYBODY* SICK!
ANNABETH!--

--WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN!? I'VE CALLED YOUR PHONE FIFTY TIMES--
WHO'D WANT TO COME BACK HERE? JUST LOOK AT HIM!
JUST SMELL HIM!
YOU OUGHTA TEACH THAT YOUNG LADY MANNERS.
ME, I'D BE GLAD TO STEP IN AND SHOW YOU EXACTLY HOW TO TEACH HER.
YES MA'AM, I'D TEACH HER GOOD.
IF YA'LL DON'T QUIT THAT HOLLERIN', I'M CALLING THE POLICE! I NEED MY BEAUTY REST!
GO AHEAD AND CALL 'EM. I'M SURE THEY'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU.
BET THEY'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
I HATE THAT MAN, MOM. I HATE BOTH OF THEM. THEY'VE RUINED EVERY-THING.
I KNOW, BABY. BUT WE NEED THEIR BUSINESS.
GO ON INSIDE AND SEE GRANDPA. HE ALWAYS MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER.

Grandpa.
He never misses a thing.
And his ears just keep getting better.
DAMN-- LIKE YELPING DOGS, OUT THERE!
THESE TRANSIENTS-- THEY'RE NO DAMN GOOD AND I HATE HAVING THEM AROUND HERE!
IT'S NO WAY TO RAISE A CHILD, HAVING THEM AROUND HERE...
NEVER MIND THEM.
I GOT SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU, GRANDPA.
OH, DEAR.
OH, NO.





Just like that.

His **voice** goes all **deep** like that and it's like it could split the **sea** in two.

It's not like you can **argue** with him.

Not when he's like **this.**

IT'S JUST A FLOWER.
I'VE ONLY SEEN THAT FLOWER ONCE BEFORE. IT WAS IN YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S HAIR THE DAY SHE CROSSED OVER. IT IS A HARBINGER OF UNSPEAKABLE *EVIL*. MAY GOD HELP US.
MAY GOD HELP US *ALL*.

TWO

They *slither* between the *here*
and the *now* and the *if* and the *why*.

The cosmic dance continues.
Night spins into light.
And the fight for today begins anew.
But I'm somewhere else altogether.
Somewhere far away.
Somewhere... pink.
Where do you go when you dream?
And why can't you stay there?
Just then.

AAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!
MOM!
Did she fall?
Is she hurt?
Was it one of those heathen boarders?!
Did something happen to Grandpa?
MOM! ARE YOU OKAY!?
HE TOOK EVERYTHING!
WHO?!

THAT TRUCKER WHO CHECKED IN LAST NIGHT!
HE EVEN STOLE THE DAMN HOUSE PLANT!
DID YOU CALL THE POLICE?
WE CAN'T KEEP HAVING 'EM COME OUT HERE -- WE STILL DON'T HAVE OUR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE LICENSE.
SO WHAT?!
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE SHUT DOWN!
SO, WHAT IF HE COMES BACK?! WHAT IF HE DOES THIS TO SOMEONE ELSE?
ANNABETH, PLEASE!
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE. JUST GET ON TO SCHOOL AND LET ME DEAL WITH THIS.

It's rare to have a moment.
It's even rarer to recognize a moment as you're having it.
Watching Mom sob in that empty room left a scar.
I will never let this happen again.
CREE!
School would have to wait.
There was something far more urgent I needed to attend to.
RIINNNGG!
CREE!

GROSS. LOOK WHO IT IS.
WHERE'S THIS WENCH THINK SHE'S GOING?
CHAM-CHAM
IF SHE SKIPS CLASS TODAY, I'M GONNA BOMB OUR BIO TEST.
ME TOO! WE CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN, CAN WE?
I told Grandpa I would destroy it.
But I can't.
Something this rare...
It haunts me.
I must know where it came from.

WASSUP, QUEEN? YOU LOST?
YEAH, SCHOOL'S BACK THE OTHER WAY.
CHAM-CHAM
Nails on a chalkboard...
A fork scraping a plate...
Cat's coughing...
That shrill... tiny... whiny voice.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT, HEATHER?
NOTHING. I JUST CARE ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION. IT PAINS ME TO SEE YOU OUT HERE ALL TRUANT.

DID YOU FORGET *WE* HAD A TEST TODAY?
I'LL MAKE IT UP.
HMM.. *THAT'S* NOT GONNA *WORK* FOR ME.
WHAT'S WRONG? CAN'T FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO COPY OFF OF?

HERE'S THE DEAL-- GO BACK TO CLASS AND I *WON'T* TELL MY DAD, I MEAN--DEAN JENKINS, I SAW SAW YOU OUT HERE *VAPING* YOUR *HEAD* OFF.
THAT'S SUCH A LIE!

A *LIE*?! BUT ALL *THREE OF US* SAW YOU DO IT, HONEY. *TSK-TSK!*
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?

LET ME *THINK*... OH, IT'S *PROBABLY* BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE YOU.
GOOD! BECAUSE I *ABSOLUTELY HATE YOU!*

POOOOW!!!
ARGHHHHHH!!!
Death.
Taxes.
My fist across her face.
Some things are inevitable.
YOU ENTITLED!
SPOILED!
PARASITE!!!
YOU'RE HURTING HER--!
LET HER GO!
For a moment I felt powerful.
Unstoppable.
THAT WAS A MISTAKE.

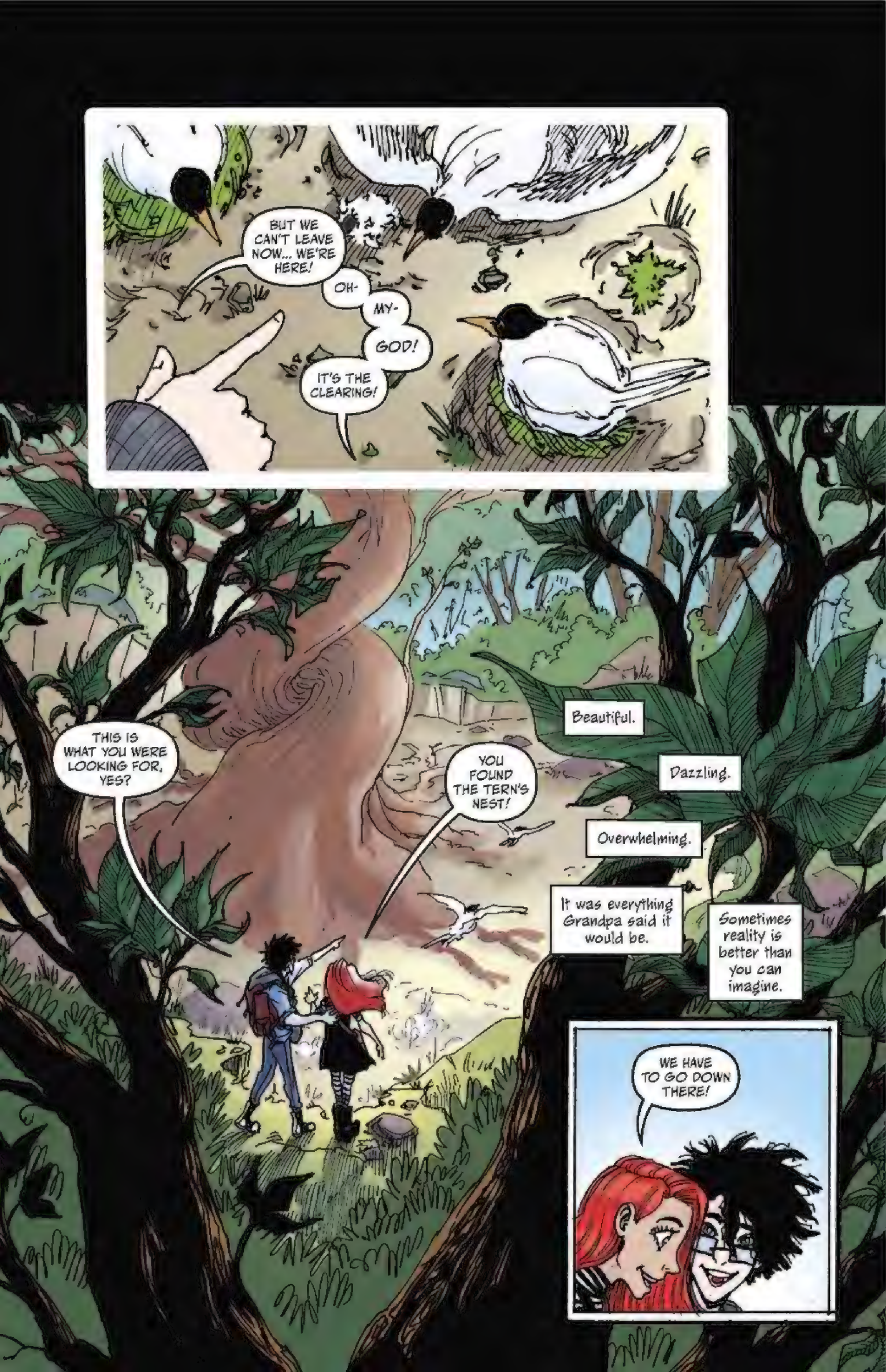
And then...
YOU'RE GONNA REGRET BEING BORN.
she knocked the flower out of my hand...
My beautiful.
Precious.
Flower.
SOMEONE'S COMING! LET'S GO!!
DON'T STEP ON IT!
SMOOOOSHHHH!
NOOOOOO!!

IF YOU SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS TO ANYBODY YOU'RE DEAD.
HAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!
THIS ISN'T OVER, QUEEN. WELCOME TO YOUR NEW DAILY ROUTINE.
The cruelty and indignity of youth.
It's lying there in pieces on the ground.
The wonder and adventure... gone.
The magic gone.
It's all gone...
RUSTLE-RUSTLE
Those stupid pigs ruined everything!

Someone approaches.
SNAP
WHAT ARE YOUR EYES DOING?
A familiar nasal condition.
KNOX...?
HERE, LET ME STAND YOU UP...
WHAT A CURIOUS DISPLAY.
OUCH! CAREFUL--!
YOUR EYES... THEY ARE... LEAKING?
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR YOUR WEIRD GAMES.
I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN PEOPLE CRY BEFORE.
HUH... THIS IS, CRY?
COME WITH ME, I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
TRUST ME, IT WILL BRING YOU ENJOYMENT.
I--I DON'T KNOW IF I'M UP FOR IT...

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN SHOW ME HOW TO *MAKE CRY?*
HAVE YOU SERIOUSLY NEVER CRIED BEFORE?
IS *MAKING CRY* DIFFICULT?
OBVIOUSLY, FOR SOME PEOPLE, IF YOU'VE NEVER DONE IT.
WHAT INGREDIENTS ARE REQUIRED?
I DUNNO. I CRY WHEN THINGS ARE SAD...
OR WHEN I GET HURT...
FRUSTRATED...
TIRED...
HUNGRY...
BORED...
SOMETIMES I CRY FOR NO REASON.
WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?
IT KINDA FEELS LIKE... HAPPY-SAD. IT SUCKS BUT, YOU KNOW YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER.

I DON'T RECOGNIZE THIS PART OF THE FOREST.
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME, EXACTLY ...?
IT'S A SURPRISE.
HONESTLY, I'VE HAD ENOUGH SURPRISES LATELY...
THE PLANTS IN THIS PART OF THE FOREST ARE MUCH DIFFERENT.
WHAT'S THAT ONE, IT'S SO FULL... AND PRETTY!
THAT'S A GIANT HOGWEED. IT'S SAP CAN CAUSE BLINDNESS.
SO, DON'T TOUCH IT?
BE MY GUEST. IF YOU DON'T MIND BLINDNESS.
THAT ONE OVER THERE IS CALLED A TRUMPET VINE.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL... LEMME GUESS, IT'S POISONOUS, TOO?
LIFE FINDS A WAY TO PROTECT ITSELF.
I'M CURIOUS. EARLIER, WHEN I SAW YOU FIGHTING...
IT LOOKED LIKE YOU WANTED TO KILL THE GIRL FOR HURTING YOU.
SO WHY DIDN'T YOU?
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S NOT FUNNY.
THAT'S JUST PLAIN CREEPY.
YOU'RE BEING WEIRD AGAIN.
HOW IS IT DIFFERENT THAN THE TRUMPET VINE PROTECTING ITSELF?
IS IT NOT THE LAW OF NATURE?
I WANNA GO BACK TO SCHOOL NOW.


BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE NOW... WE'RE HERE!
OH-
MY-
GOD!
IT'S THE CLEARING!
THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, YES?
YOU FOUND THE TERN'S NEST!
Beautiful.
Dazzling.
Overwhelming.
It was everything Grandpa said it would be.
Sometimes reality is better than you can imagine.
WE HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE!

I HAVE TO TAKE PICTURES TO SHOW GRANDPA.
NO. WE DON'T WANT TO UPSET THEM.
BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HAPPY THIS WILL MAKE HIM.
HE TOOK MY GRANDMA HERE WHEN THEY WERE DATING.
WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG. OH COME ON!! COME ON!! -- PLEASE!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
WHY ARE YOU ATTACKING ME?
I'M HUGGING YOU, YOU WEIRDO!
HUH... "HUGGING" FEELS... VERY WARMLY.
I RATHER LIKE IT.
WHAT.
IS.
THAT!?
DO YOU SEE THAT TREE?

THAT'S WHERE THE FLOWER CAME FROM!
FROM YESTERDAY!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT...
IT'S PRACTICALLY... GLOWING.
WE HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE!
ANNABETH... WAIT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LET GO!
WE MUST STAY FAR AWAY FROM THAT TREE.
BUT, I WANNA GET A CLOSER LOOK!
IT'S DANGEROUS TO GET TOO CLOSE.
THAT TREE PROTECTS ITSELF LIKE NO OTHER.
I DON'T NEED YOUR PERMISSION.
I'M GOING DOWN THERE. I MUST!

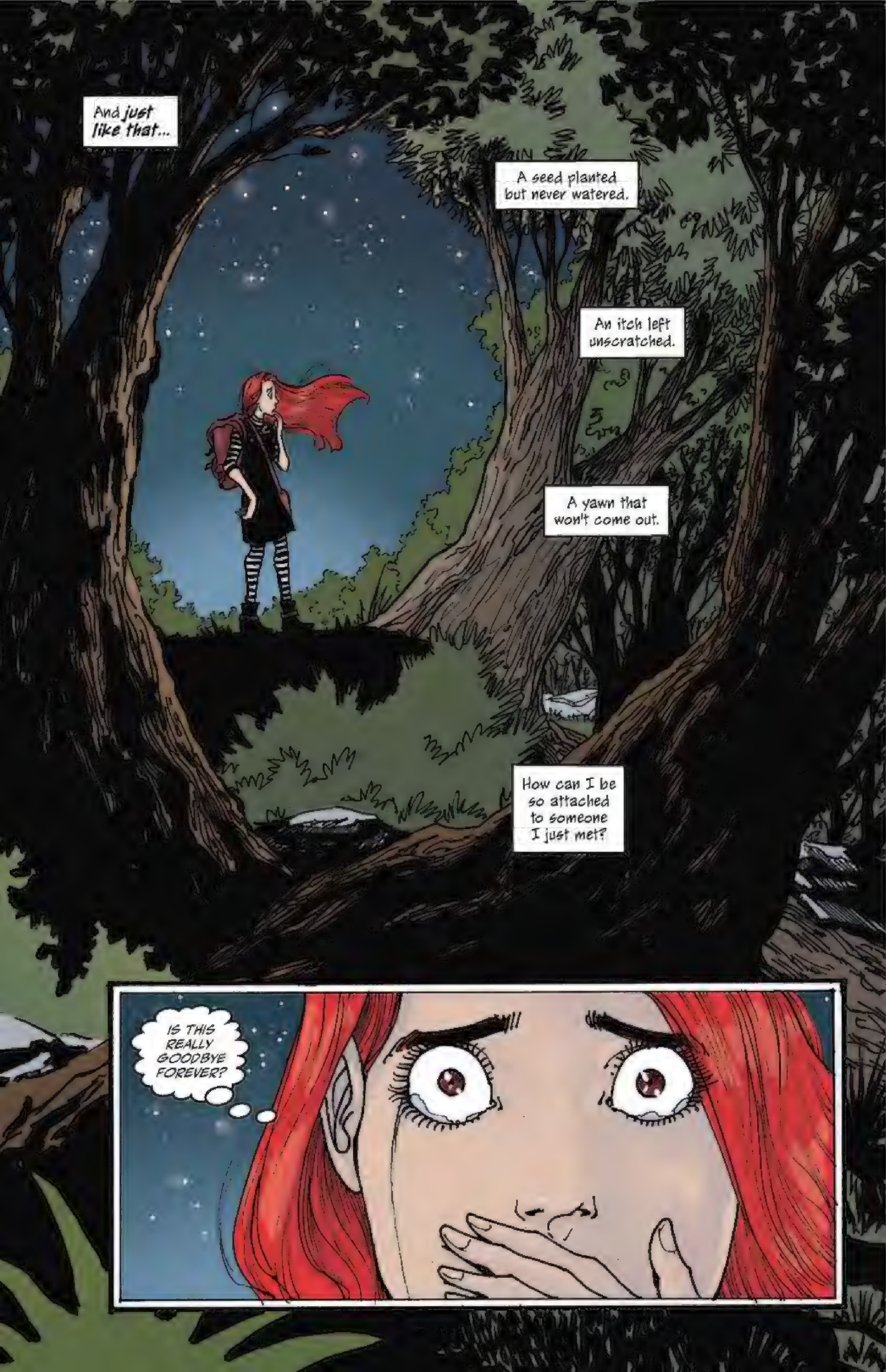
Ancient.
Majestic.
Familiar.
I can't look away.
It's like I've been here before.
OKAY, THERE'S THE TREE. WE GOT A GOOD, CLOSE LOOK.
THERE'S AN OPENING IN THE ROOTS.
IT'S ALMOST LIKE A DEN.
DO YOU THINK... SOME THING LIVES INSIDE?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT YOU HERE. WE MUST GO NOW.
WAIT! I WANNA GET ANOTHER FLOWER!
PLEASE, ANNABETH. WE RISK PUNISHMENT GETTING THIS CLOSE.
THERE ARE FORCES AT PLAY.
DARK FORCES YOU WOULDN'T AND CANNOT UNDERSTAND.
STOP IT! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO SCARE ME.
PROMISE ME, YOU'LL NEVER COME BACK HERE.

I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL GRANDPA WHAT WE SAW.
YOU SHOULD COME MEET HIM.
I THINK YOU TWO WOULD GET ALONG.
I CAN'T. I MUST RETURN HOME NOW.
NONSENSE, YOU'RE STAYING FOR DINNER.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LEFT-OVER SALISBURY STEAK...?
ANNABETH, YOU'RE NOT LISTENING...
I'M LEAVING. THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME WE SEE EACH OTHER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
I THOUGHT WE WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME.
ANNABETH... WAIT.

I ENJOYED MEETING YOU, BUT MY FAMILY NEEDS ME.
RIGHT THIS SECOND?
THEY HAVE BEEN AWAITING MY RETURN.
BUT I HAD TO SEE YOU ONE LAST TIME.
WHERE DO YOU LIVE? I'LL COME VISIT.
TEXT ME YOUR NUMBER.
I'M AFRAID THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE...
WHY CAN'T YOU GIVE A STRAIGHT ANSWER TO ANYTHING?
WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?
YOU ARE A FASCINATING CREATURE, ANNABETH. I WILL TREASURE OUR TIME TOGETHER.

NO! I WON'T ACCEPT THIS!
YOU CAN'T LEAVE!
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN. BUT I WAS NEVER REALLY HERE...
PLEASE... I WAS JUST STARTING TO BELIEVE THINGS COULD CHANGE.
IF YOU GO, YOU'RE TAKING MY HOPE WITH YOU.

The final episode of your favorite TV show.
The last day of summer vacation.
Finishing your birthday cake.
The first and last kiss with a stranger.
I THINK I KNOW HOW CRY WORKS NOW.
VERY HAPPY-SAD.
KNOX-- WAIT.


And just like that...
A seed planted but never watered.
An itch left unscratched.
A yawn that won't come out.
How can I be so attached to someone I just met?
IS THIS REALLY GOODBYE FOREVER?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?! I'VE TRIED YOUR CELL LIKE 8,000 TIMES!
SORRY, I DIDN'T HAVE MY RINGER ON. WHAT'S GOING ON?
HONEY... GRANDPA WENT INTO SHOCK THIS AFTER-NOON--
WHAT? IS HE OKAY?

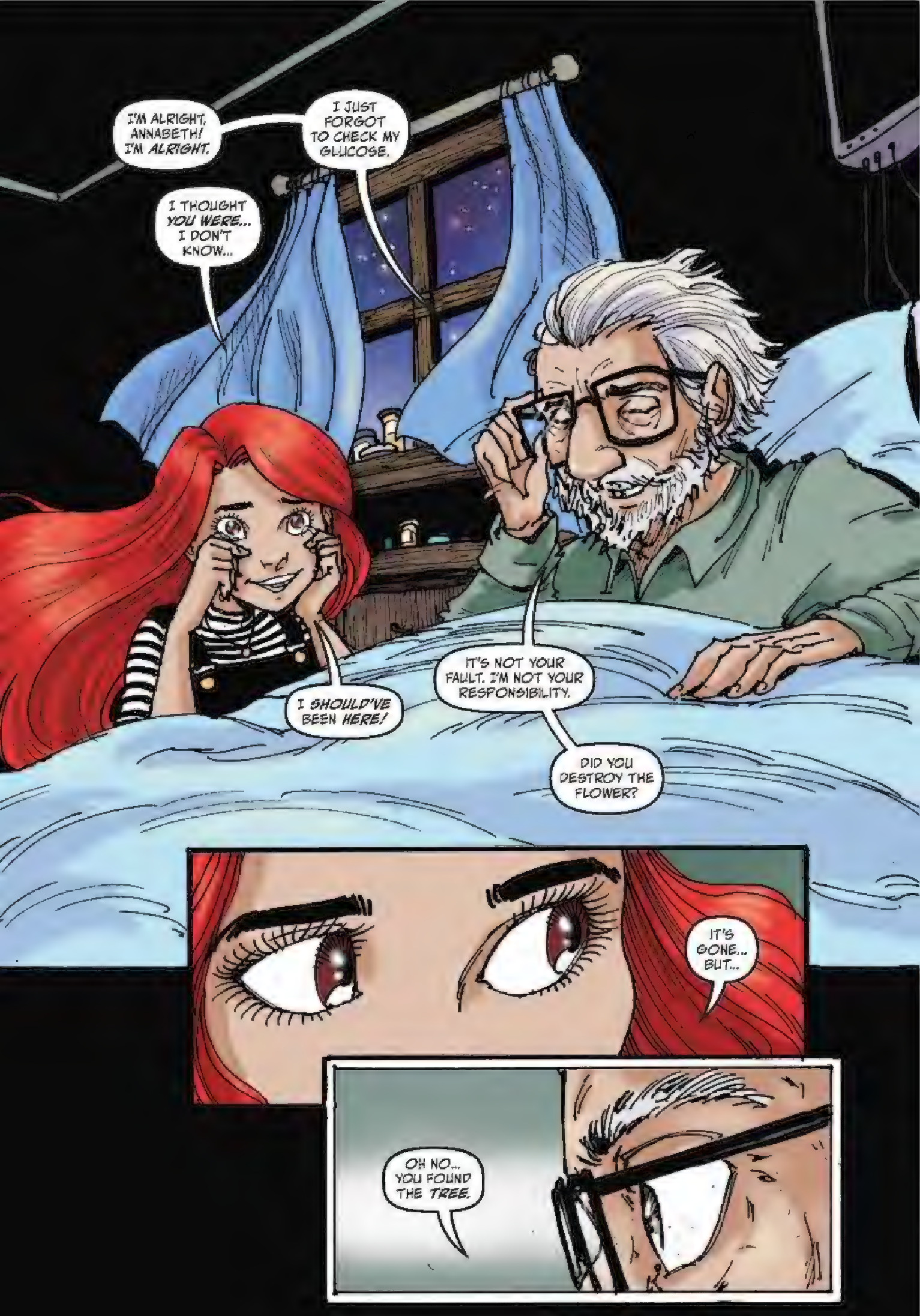
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
I SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE.
I ALWAYS REMIND HIM TO TAKE HIS MEDICINE.
Suddenly, Knox's words echoed in my brain.
Punishment.
Dark forces.
My stomach churned.
Grandpa tried to warn me.
I took the flower.
I dared to look into the tree.
And now it's seeking its revenge.
Could it be?
What have I done?
Please forgive me. PLEASE!

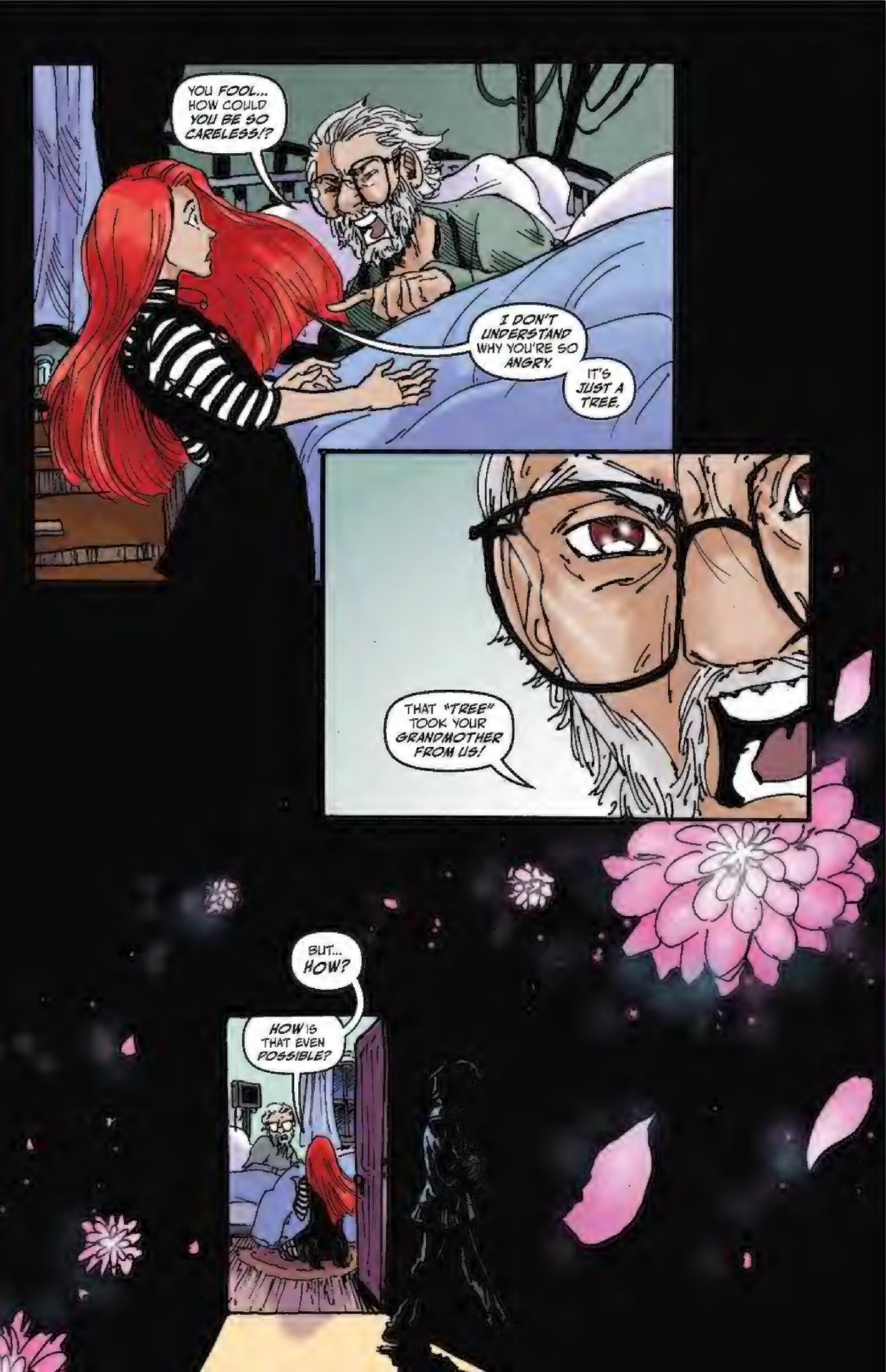
EMMA RUBEN
THREE

They ***wait***. Until the forces ***converge***.
Until the hidden ***voices*** give to ***wailing***
and the ***wailing*** splits into ***screams***.

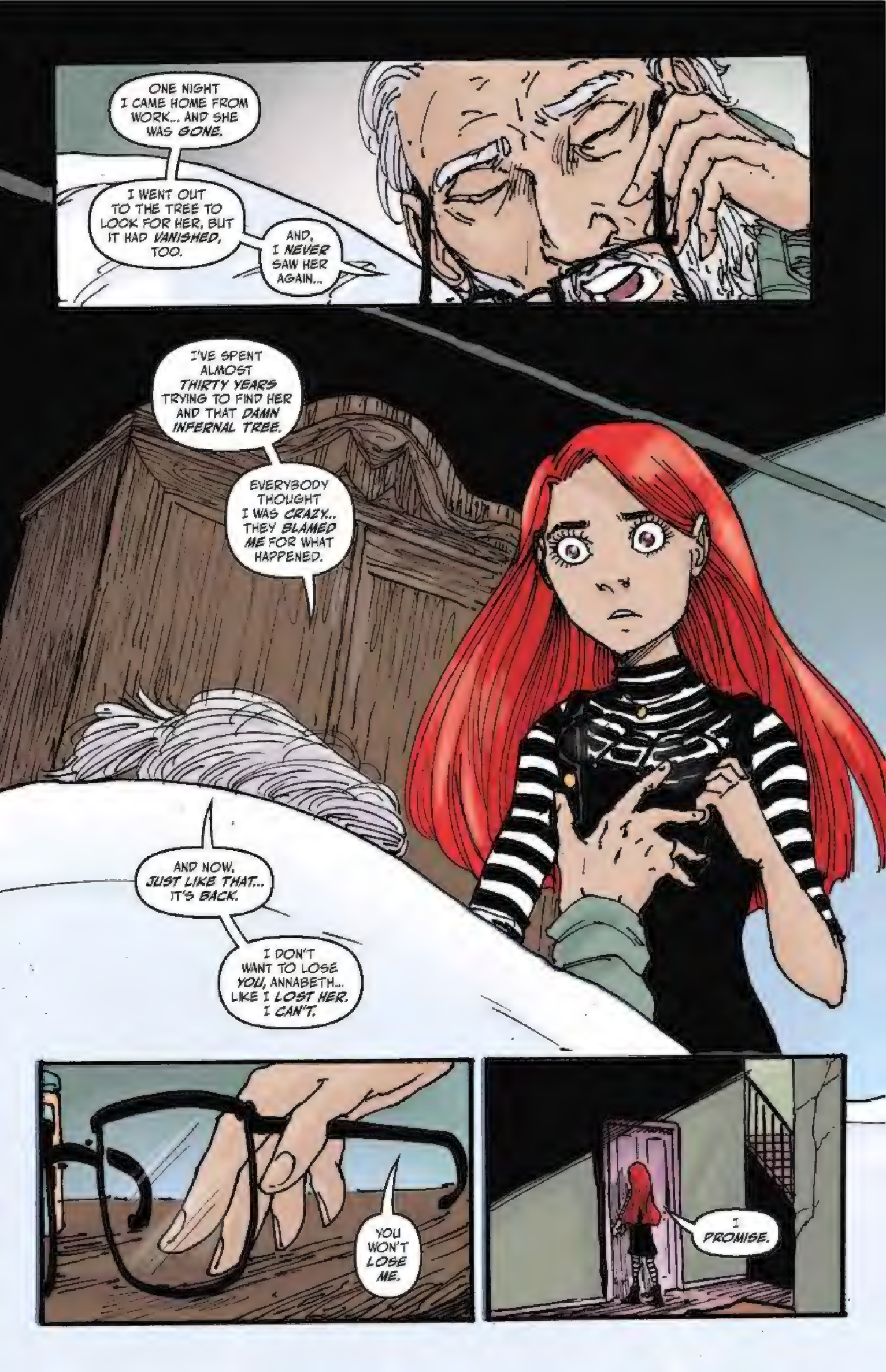
It's all my fault.
They told me to stay away from the woods.
They told me to destroy the pink flower.
They told me never go back to the tree, but I did.
And now Grandpa is gonna suffer.

But how can that be?
It's only a tree.
Oh God.
OH GOD.
GRANDPA!!!
ANNABETH?


I'M ALRIGHT, ANNABETH! I'M ALRIGHT.
I JUST FORGOT TO CHECK MY GLUCOSE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE... I DON'T KNOW...
I SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. I'M NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.
DID YOU DESTROY THE FLOWER?
IT'S GONE... BUT...
OH NO... YOU FOUND THE TREE.

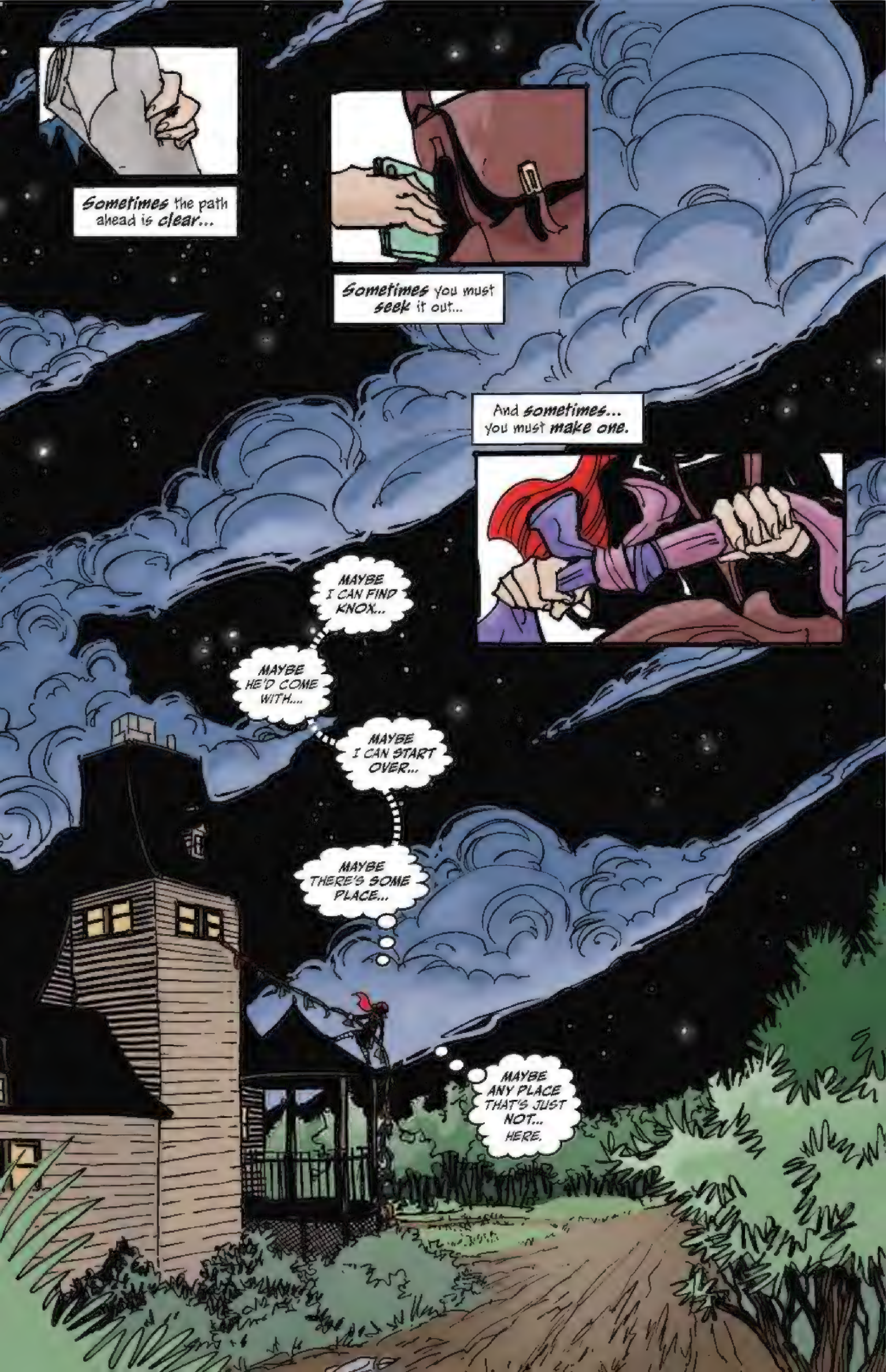

YOU FOOL... HOW COULD YOU BE SO CARELESS!?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE SO ANGRY.
IT'S JUST A TREE.
THAT "TREE" TOOK YOUR GRANDMOTHER FROM US!
BUT... HOW?
HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

"YOUR GRANDMA AND I WERE OUT WATCHING THE TERNS WHEN WE FIRST DISCOVERED IT.
"IT WAS THE *MOST MAGNIFICENT* TREE WE HAD EVER SEEN...
"IT WAS BRAND NEW BUT IT LOOKED LIKE IT STOOD THERE FOR A *THOUSAND YEARS.*
"WE SPENT ALL AFTERNOON UNDER ITS *GLOWING* LEAVES... IT WAS LIKE THE TREE WAS *BEGGING US TO STAY.*
"AS THE DAYS PASSED YOUR GRANDMA WENT OUT THERE EVERY CHANCE SHE *GOT.*
"SHE BECAME *CONVINCED* IT WAS *COMMUNICATING* WITH HER... *CALLING* TO HER... MAKING HER *DO THINGS. ODD THINGS...*
"THE TREE *CHANGED* HER.
"IT CHANGED *US.* WE STARTED FIGHTING..."


ONE NIGHT I CAME HOME FROM WORK... AND SHE WAS GONE.
I WENT OUT TO THE TREE TO LOOK FOR HER, BUT IT HAD VANISHED, TOO.
AND, I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN...
I'VE SPENT ALMOST THIRTY YEARS TRYING TO FIND HER AND THAT DAMN INFERNAL TREE.
EVERYBODY THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY.. THEY BLAMED ME FOR WHAT HAPPENED.
AND NOW, JUST LIKE THAT... IT'S BACK.
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, ANNABETH... LIKE I LOST HER. I CAN'T.
YOU WON'T LOSE ME.
I PROMISE.

The stink of gut-rot booze and cruelty fills the air.
CREEEAAAAKK
HA-HA. YOU CAUSING ALL KINDS OF DRAMA, GIRLY...
LEAVE ME ALONE, MEEKS.
STILL AIN'T GOT NO MANNERS, I SEE.
YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME, BUT I'LL LEARN YOU.
OH, I'LL LEARN YOU.
WHAT DID YOU DO--?
I LEARN YOU GOOD.

Why'd he kill that bird?
That doesn't make any sense.
There is something **bad** going on around here.
Something **really** bad.
MEEKS. WHO ARE YOU? *WHAT* ARE YOU?


Sometimes the path ahead is clear...
Sometimes you must seek it out...
And sometimes... you must make one.
MAYBE I CAN FIND KNOX...
MAYBE HE'D COME WITH....
MAYBE I CAN START OVER...
MAYBE THERE'S SOME PLACE...
MAYBE ANY PLACE THAT'S JUST NOT... HERE.

Below.
Far below.
The Goblins wait.
HALT!
HALT!
HOLD YOUR HORSES.
HOLD YOUR HORSES.
WE GOT WHAT YOU NEED.
WE GOT WHAT YOU NEED.
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
THE RELIC IS HERE.
THE RELIC IS HERE.
THE RELIC IS READY.
THE RELIC IS READY.
MOVE QUICK.
MOVE QUICK.
WE'LL WAKE IT.

THIS REALM HOLDS MANY WONDERS.
IT TOOK TIME TO FIND WHAT WE NEEDED.
OR... PERHAPS... YOU PLOT AGAINST US?
SUSPICION. THE RELIC IS CORRUPTING.
NOT THAT YOU HAD ANY GOOD THOUGHTS TO BEGIN WITH!
AS I RECALL, THE ONLY REASON WE CAME TO BE IN THIS FORBIDDEN HELLSCAPE IS BECAUSE OF YOU! TELL ME, WHY IS THAT?
YOU IN THERE, KNOX?
YOU BETRAY US.

WHERE IS HE? I KNOW I HEARD HIM.
A MARAUDER!
HE BROUGHT A MARAUDER.
PROTECT THE RELIC!
GET RID OF THEM!
GET RID OF THEM AT ONCE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
=GASP=

KNOX? IS THAT... YOU?
YOU LOOK DIFFERENT.
COME CLOSER. I CAN'T SEE YOUR FACE.
YOU MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION!
PROTECTION?
KNOX! WAIT!
I HEARD VOICES.
WERE YOU WITH SOMEONE?
GO HOME, ANNABETH!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?
PLEASE WAIT!
WHO WERE THOSE PEOPLE?
I DIDN'T HEAR ANY-BODY.
KNOX?
WHERE'D YOU GO?
THIS IS GETTING PRETTY INTENSE... EVEN FOR YOU.
I CAN'T LET HER FOLLOW ME.

ARRRRGGGGGGGHHH!
ALRIGHT, FINE!
YOU WANNA PLAY GAMES? FINE, WE'LL PLAY GAMES!
I'M GOING BACK TO THE PINK TREE!
JUST TRY AND STOP ME!
OH NO. LORD HOZ IS IN DANGER.
PLEASE TELL ME YOU HEARD THAT SCREAMING!
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
ARE YOU REALLY GONNA LEAVE ME OUT HERE ALL ALONE?
OH NO! MY MAP!
WHAT IN THE HELL?

The tree.
Ancient.
Glowing.
Mesmerizing.
Has it always been here?
Has it always been calling?
KNOX!?
AAARRRGGGHHHHHH!
THE RELIC BEWITCHES YOU.
AS IT DOES THE BOY!

SHRAK!
BACK AWAY FROM LORD HOZ!
BACK AWAY!
SHE'S WEAK!
SHE'S WEAK!
NO LONGER FIT TO CARRY THE RELIC.
MY BURDEN.
IT WILL BE MY BURDEN NOW...
WE MUST STOP HIM.
WE MUST STOP HIM BEFORE HE OPENS IT.
STOP!
LISTEN TO REASON.
YOU ARE CHARMED BY THE RELIC.
IT ENDS HERE.
YOU MAY HAVE FOOLED LORD HOZ, BUT YOU DON'T FOOL ME!!
YOUR MUTINY ENDS HERE, BOY.

It *beckons.*
THE VOICES.
I HEAR THEM AGAIN...
IS IT THE TREE?
IS IT TRYING TO COMMUNICATE?
DID IT TALK TO GRANDMA LIKE THIS?
KNOX?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!
RUN AS YOU'D LIKE, BOY!
YOUR TREACHERY SLOWS YOU DOWN.
STOP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

I WILL PROTECT YOU.
DROP IT.
THE RELIC DECEIVES YOU.
LIES!
IT IS YOU AND LORD HOZ WHO ARE UNDER ITS SPELL.
I AM THE ONLY ONE STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY IT.
THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN WITHSTAND ITS CHARMS.
THEN IT'S SETTLED. YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE!

MAY FATE GUIDE MY HAND...

SCHEWWWWW!

NOOOOOOOOO

IT'S NOT THE TREE TALKING...

IT'S COMING FROM INSIDE THE TREE..

It *harkens* to you, as it *always* has.
It will *not* be denied.
WHAT IS THAT... *GLOW?*
In nature...
What is most colorful...
Most beautiful...
Is often the most deadly.

OH MY...
IT'S... SO BEAUTIFUL!
LOOK HOW THE COLORS CHANGE.
HOW THE PATTERNS MOVE.
IT'S LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER SEEN.
OH-MY-GOD. THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE!
CLICK!

ANNABETH!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

KA BOOOOM!!!!!

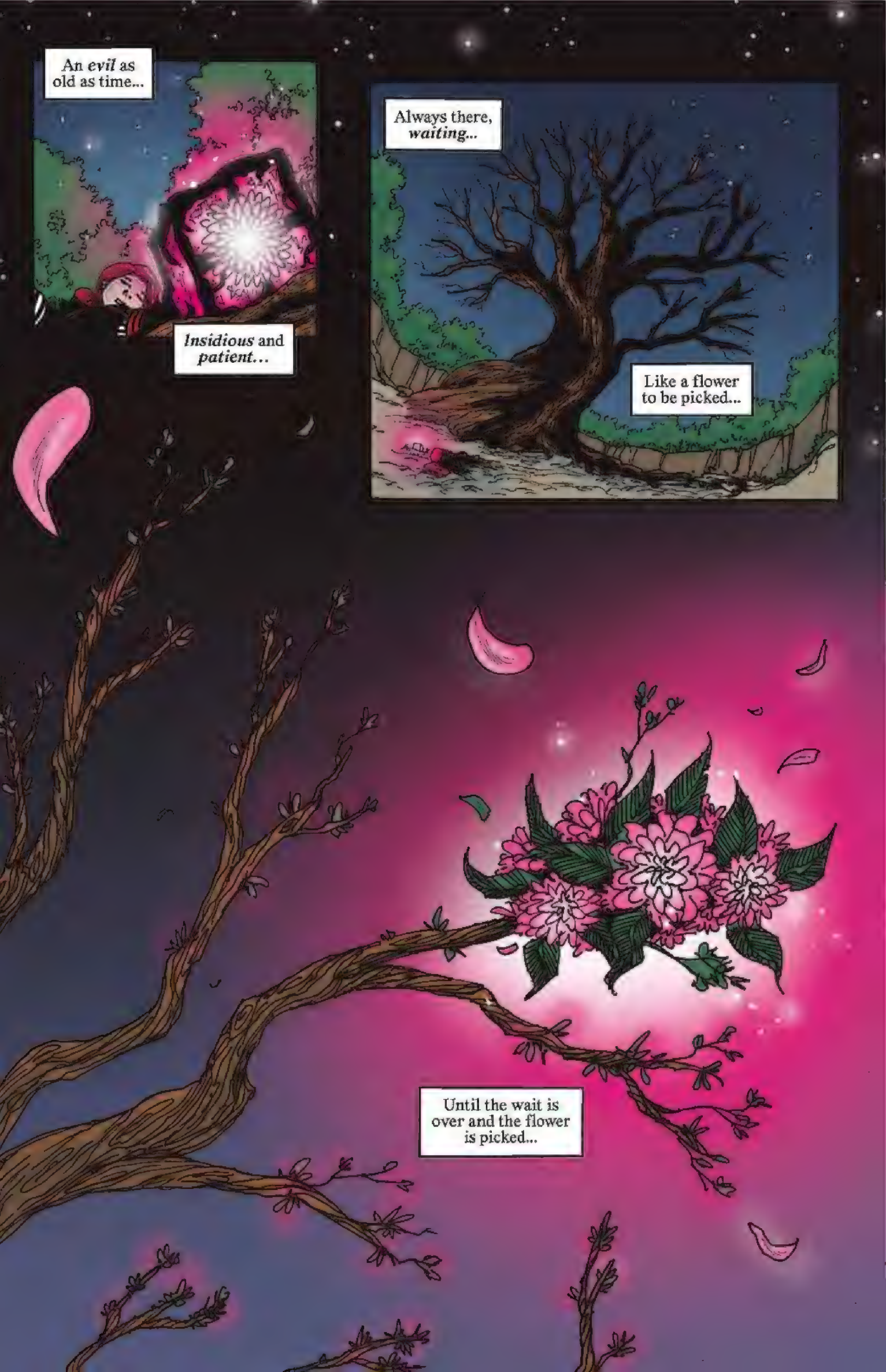
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME!?

THIS IS YOUR FAULT, BOY.

WE ARE DOOMED!

DOOMED!

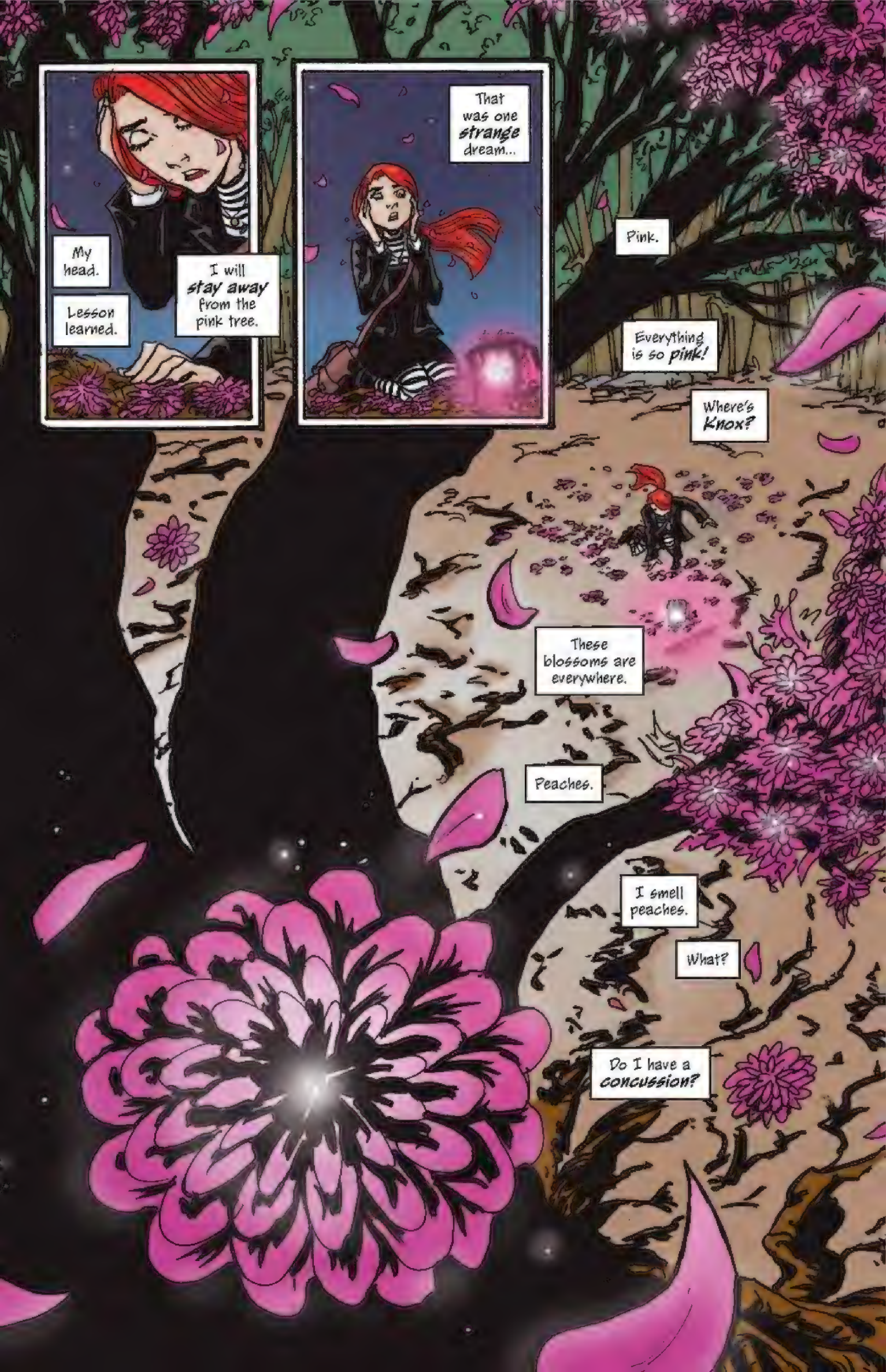
GRANDMA?

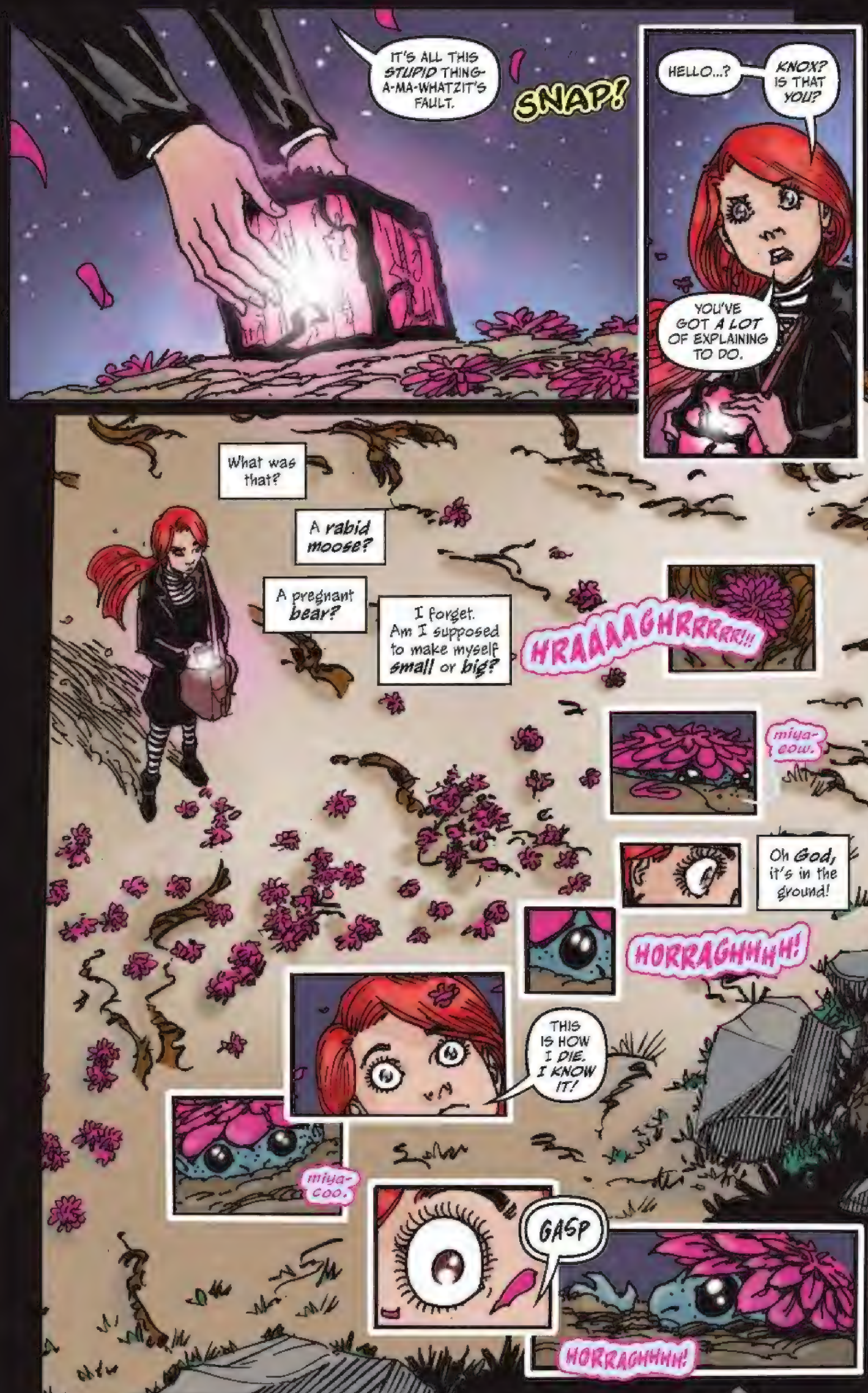

An *evil* as old as time...
Insidious and *patient*...
Always there, *waiting*...
Like a flower to be picked...
Until the wait is over and the flower is picked...

FOUR

And like a horde of *locusts*, they *rise*.

KA
BOOOM!!!
GRANDMA?


My head.
Lesson learned.
I will stay away from the pink tree.
That was one strange dream...
Pink.
Everything is so pink!
Where's Knox?
These blossoms are everywhere.
Peaches.
I smell peaches.
What?
Do I have a concussion?


IT'S ALL THIS STUPID THING-A-MA-WHATZIT'S FAULT.
SNAP!
HELLO...?
KNOX? IS THAT YOU?
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO.
What was that?
A rabid moose?
A pregnant bear?
I forget. Am I supposed to make myself small or big?
HRAAAAGHRRRRR!!!
miya-eow.
Oh God, it's in the ground!
HORRAGHHHH!
THIS IS HOW I DIE. I KNOW IT!
miya-coo.
GASP
HORRAGHHHH!

HARRAGH!
miya-eow!
miya-coo!
HEY! I KNOW YOU!
YOU'RE A DEMON ELF! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I USED TO DRAW YOU.
BACK WHEN I WAS LITTLE.

...
MAYBE I HIT MY HEAD HARDER THAN I THOUGHT.
miya-coo.
miya-eow.
eow.
YOU'RE A BIG OL' SCARY THING, AREN'T YOU?
miya-coo.
miya-coo. coo.
miya-coo.
YOU'RE SO CURIOUS, AREN'T YOU?
HEY THERE, ITTY-BITTY.
LOOK AT YOU HOLDING UP YOUR LITTLE FINGER.
ARE YOU COPYING ME?
miya-coo.
HAHAHAHA!

I CAN'T TAKE IT. YOU'RE TOO CUTE!
I WISH I COULD BRING YOU HOME WITH ME!
BUT... YOU'RE NOT REAL....
miya-eow
OH MY, LOOK AT THAT! YOU BROUGHT... FRIENDS.
There's... so many of them.
Why are they getting so close?
Now would be a good time to wake up.
C'mon, Annabeth-- wake up! WAKE UP!
miya-eow
miya-eow
Okay... time for plan B...

BYE-BYE.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
OH GOD. THEY'RE TALKING NOW.
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
THEY'RE JUST DRAWINGS, DRAWINGS AREN'T REAL.
miya-coo?

This just doesn't let up!
HRAARRGH!
miya-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
bye-bye.
Damn, they're persistent.
The faster I run. The faster they run.
It's like they're...
...copying me.
miya-bye?
bye-bye.
I take a step.
They take a step.
I say bye... they say bye.
YOU'RE JUST A BUNCH OF COPYCATS.
copycats.
THIS IS MAKING MY HEAD HURT.
EVEN MORE THAN IT ALREADY DOES...

THIS ISN'T REAL. THIS ISN'T REAL.
YOU GUYS HAVE TO STAY OUT THERE!
YOU UNDER-STAND?
STAAAAAY!
stay. stay.
stay. stay.
stay. stay.
stay. stay.
stay. stay.
bye-bye.
miya-stay.
NOOO!!!!
STAY-- THERE!!!! NOT HERE!
miya-noo!
staaay!

staaay...
What are you trying to tell me? And why...?
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS...
BUT YOU CAN COME INSIDE, ONLY FOR ONE NIGHT!
BUT YOU HAVE TO KEEP QUIET... SHHHHHHH!
shhh-shhh
shhh-shhh
shhh-shhh
shhh-shhh
HURRY... BEFORE SOMEONE SEES YOU!

zzzzzzzzzzzzz
miya-
HAARRGH!
HEY! STOP! DON'T GO OVER THERE.
zzzzzzzzzzzz
WE DON'T WANT TO WAKE HIM.
zzzzzzzzzzz
miya-
ooh...
zzzzzzzzz
THAT'S MEEKS...
HE IS A BAD MAN.
miya-
bad
SHHHH. YES, VERY BAD.
miya-
shhh
very-
shhh-
bad
ALRIGHT, UP TO MY ROOM.
SINGLE FILE. NICE AND ORDERLY.

SHOULD BE SAFE UP HERE.
ANYWAY, I HOPE.
miya- safe.
WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE ABODE.
I WONDER IF I COULD FIND MY OLD DRAWINGS OF YOU.
I DID THEM SO LONG AGO... I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
miya- haarghh???
OH, THAT, YEAH...
MEEKS DID THAT...
SHE WAS MY BIRD.
MY FRIEND.
I HATE THAT MAN SO MUCH...
I WISH IT WERE THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
HE'S THE ONE WHO OUGHTA BE IN THAT BAG.
I GUESS... I SHOULDN'T SAY THAT.
miya- meeks.

I'LL BURY HER IN THE MORNING.
SORRY, I'M NOT MUCH OF A HOST.
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
ALL I HAVE ARE SOME OLD CHIPS.
miya-num.
num-chips.
chip-chips.
miya-chips.
CRUNCH!
num-num.
YOU GUYS ARE SUCH DORKS.
I USED TO LOVE DRAWING YOU.
IT'S SILLY, BUT IT MADE ME FEEL SAFE.
YAAAAWNN
IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY...
I'M SO...
SLEEPY...
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

miya-coo?

shhh-shhh!

hissss

zzzzzzzzzzzz!

shhh-shhh!

AAAAAGHRRRRRRRRRR!!!

HHHHHHHHHHHHRRRRRRAAA

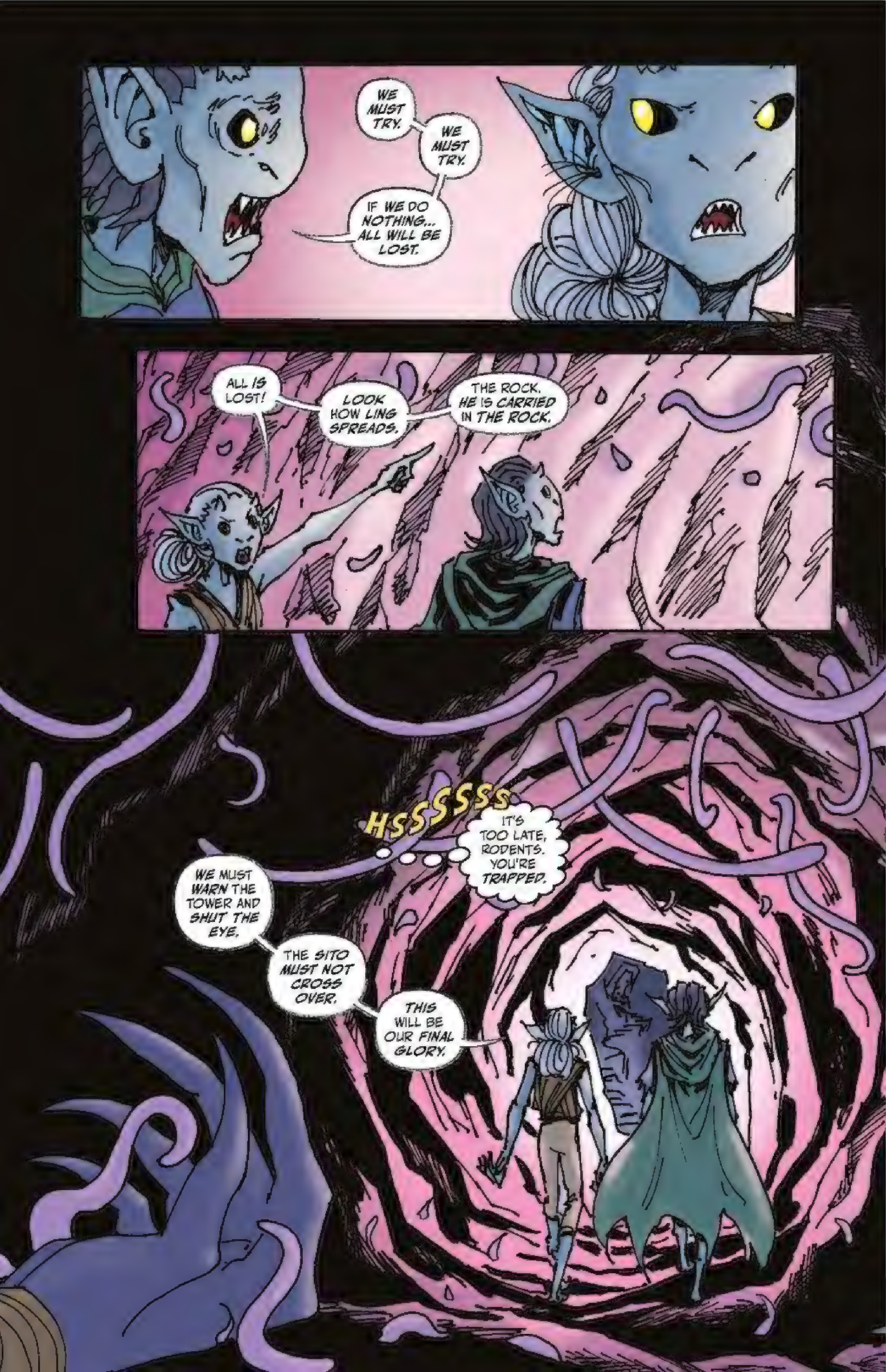
zzzzzzzzzzz!

zzzzzzzzzz
HORRAGHHHH!
zzzzzzzzz
zzzzz
meeeeeeks.
shhhhhh.

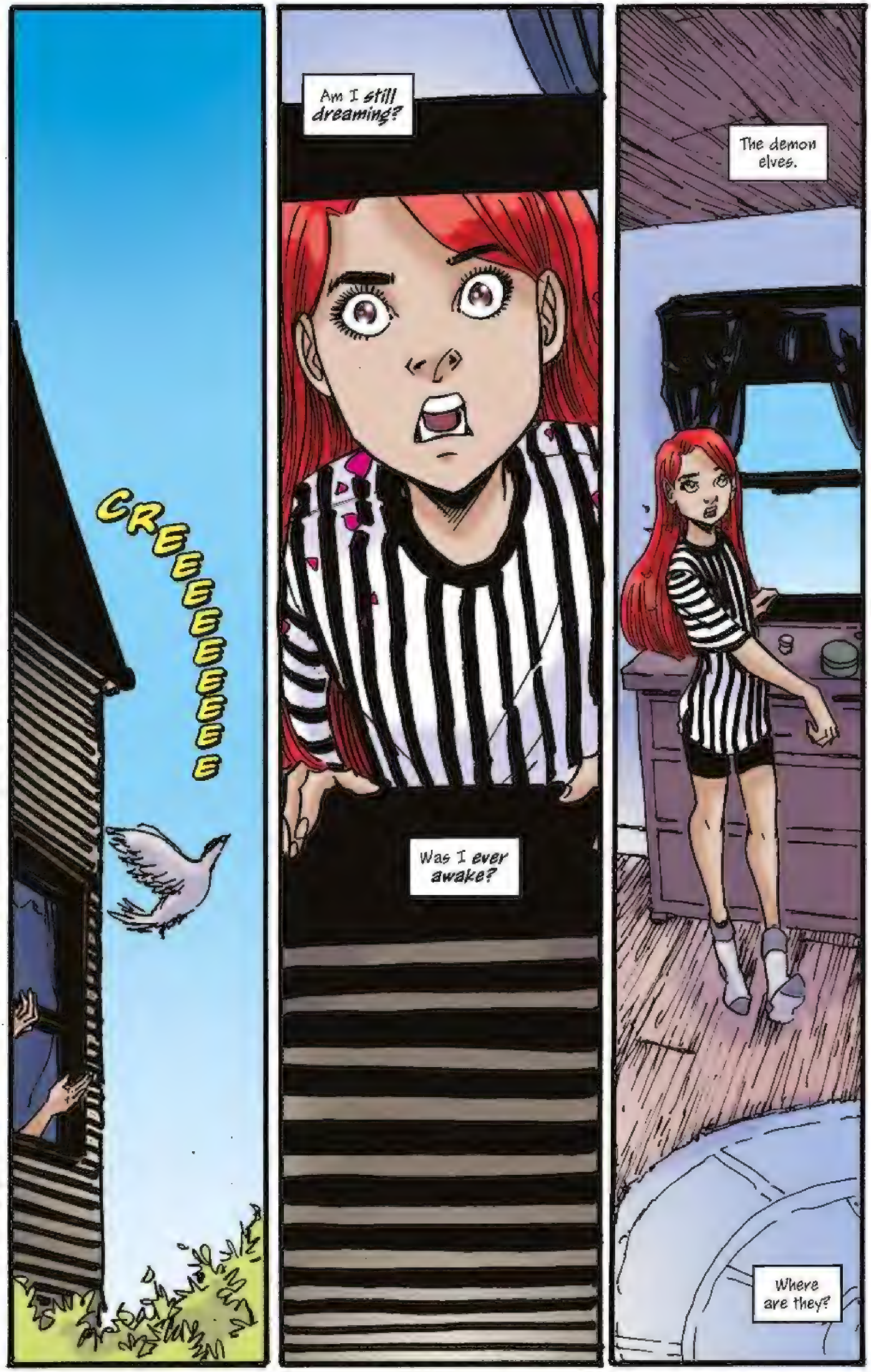
BAD-BAD.
MEEKS-BAD.
What happens when resistance is removed?
When edges are blurred?
When there is nothing left to rebel against?
BLURP!

miya-eow.
shhh-shh.
NO... IT-IT CAN'T BE...
Something is wrong.
Something is very wrong.
And now we go below.
Far below.
Where the Goblins grieve.
LORD HOZ!
LORD HOZ!
COME QUICK!
COME QUICK!
BROTHER CARRIES LING.
AWAY!
AWAY!

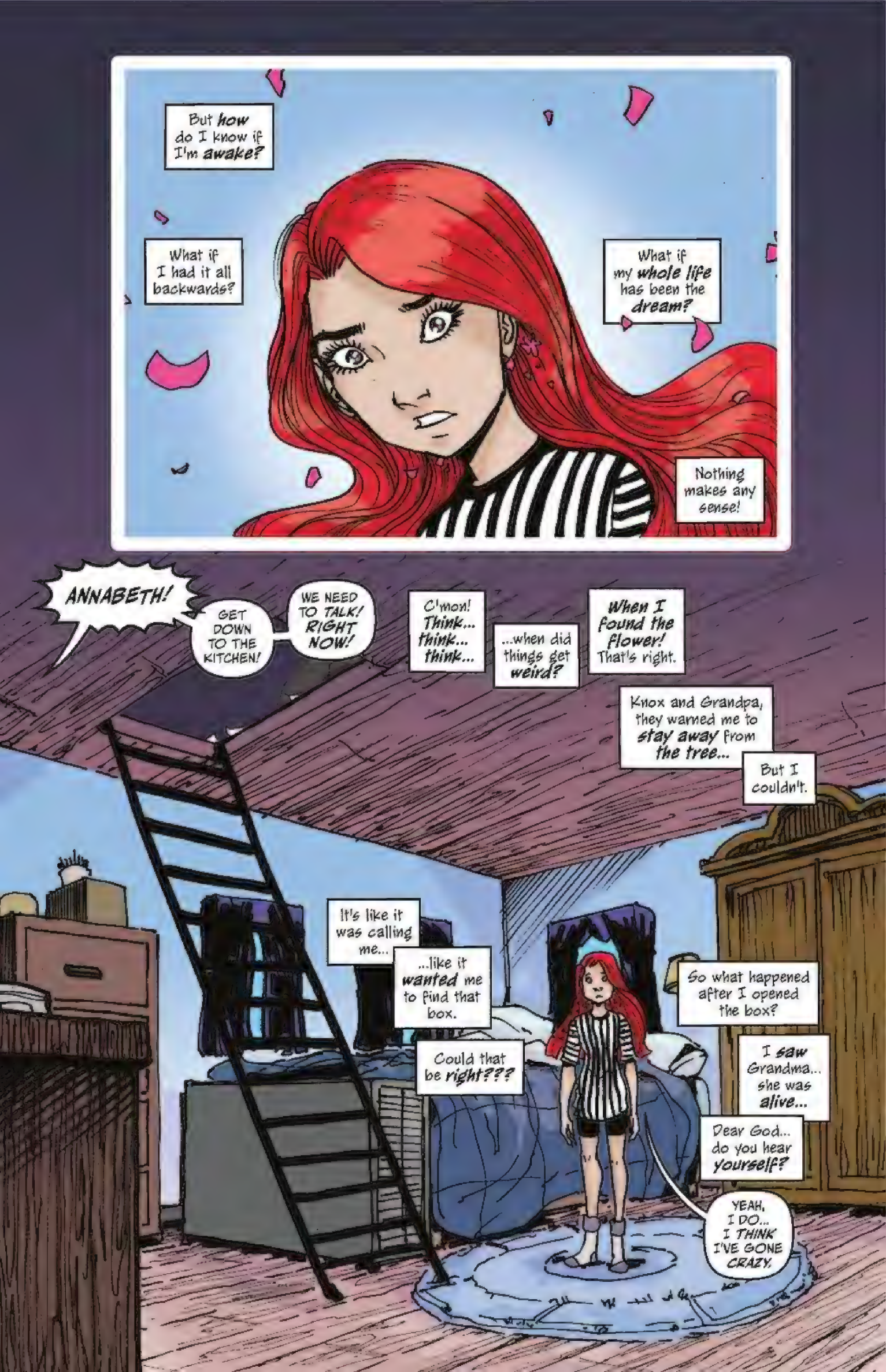
NOT POSSIBLE!
NOT POSSIBLE!
YOUR FAULT!
ALL YOUR FAULT!
YOU BROUGHT DEATH.
YOU LET THE RELIC GO.
YOU BURDEN US ALL!
THE SITO WILL BE HERE SOON.
THEY WILL DESTROY ALL.
WE ARE DOOMED!
DOOMED!
I WILL FIX THIS.
I WILL FIX THIS.
I WILL BRING BACK THE RELIC.
NO TIME!
NO TIME!
IT HAS BEEN AWOKEN!


WE MUST TRY.
WE MUST TRY.
IF WE DO NOTHING... ALL WILL BE LOST.
ALL IS LOST!
LOOK HOW LING SPREADS.
THE ROCK. HE IS CARRIED IN THE ROCK.
HSSSSSS
IT'S TOO LATE, RODENTS. YOU'RE TRAPPED.
WE MUST WARN THE TOWER AND SHUT THE EYE.
THE SITO MUST NOT CROSS OVER.
THIS WILL BE OUR FINAL GLORY.

CREEEEEEEE!!!!!
AAHHHHHHHHHH!
WHAT
WHAT IN HELL?
WHAT IN HELL IS HAPPENING?!
WHAT... ARE YOU DOING... ALIVE?
CREEEEEEEEE!!!!
CALM DOWN, GIRL!
CALM DOWN NOW.
LET'S GET YOU SOME AIR.


CREEEEEEEE
Am I still dreaming?
Was I ever awake?
The demon elves.
Where are they?

HELLO? YOU IN THERE...?
ITTY-BITTY?
GUYS! TIME TO COME OUT NOW!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR GAMES!
PLEASE?
I HAVE MORE CHIPS FOR YOU.
Oh my God... this is so stupid.
Of course they weren't real!
Get it together, Annabeth!
ANNABETH! COME DOWN-STAIRS!
Guess I woke up.


But how do I know if I'm awake?
What if I had it all backwards?
What if my whole life has been the dream?
Nothing makes any sense!
ANNABETH!
GET DOWN TO THE KITCHEN!
WE NEED TO TALK! RIGHT NOW!
C'mon! Think... think... think...
...when did things get weird?
When I found the flower! That's right.
Knox and Grandpa, they warned me to stay away from the tree...
But I couldn't.
It's like it was calling me...
...like it wanted me to find that box.
Could that be right???
So what happened after I opened the box?
I saw Grandma... she was alive...
Dear God... do you hear yourself?
YEAH, I DO... I THINK I'VE GONE CRAZY.

FIVE

And with eyes dead of ***soul***...

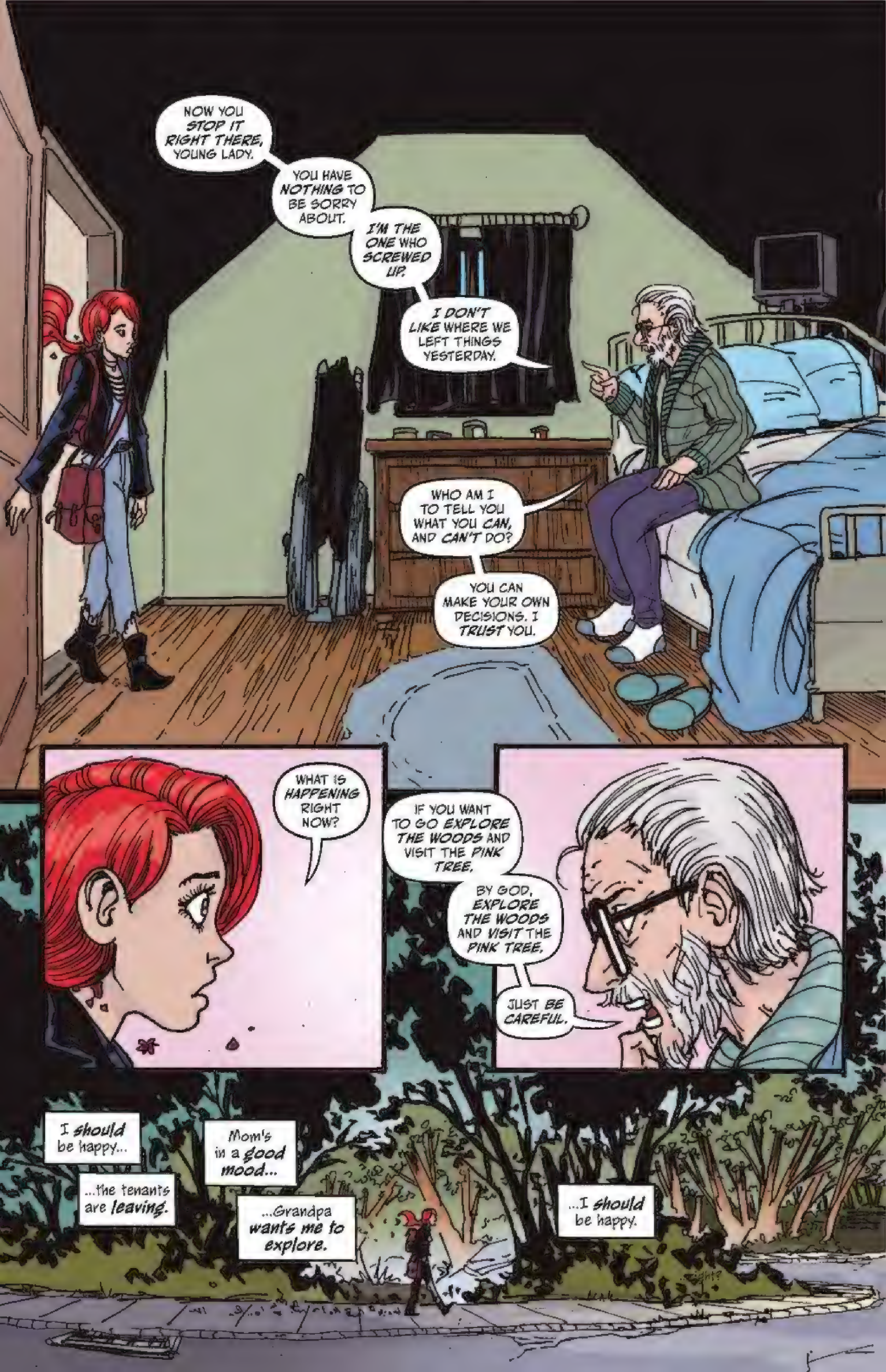
ANNABETH GWENDLYN DEAN!
DOWNSTAIRS, NOW!
YES MOTHER!
RIGHT AWAY MOTHER!
What wonders await me today?
Clogged toilet?
Vomit sheets?
Public reading of my diary?
?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!
...AND NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'M SO SCARED OF DOLPHINS.
Ugh.
Smoke-lung cackle.
Burnt coffee.
Take me back to my nightmares... please!

THAT'S HILARIOUS! YOU'RE HILARIOUS, MEEKS!
I STILL CAN'T PICTURE YOU SURFING. HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE IN HAWAII?
NOT LONG ENOUGH! GUESS I WAS GENERAL CONTRACTING OUT THERE 'BOUT EIGHT YEARS OR SO... GIVE'R TAKE.
THAT EXPLAINS YOUR MAD DRYWALL SKILLS!
PLEASE. IT WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO.

WHAT THE HELL IS ALL OF THIS?

OH, THERE YOU ARE! GOOD MORNING, SWEET-HEART!
MEEKS GOT UP EARLY AND FIXED UP THE RUBY ROOM FOR US. IT LOOKS BRAND NEW!
AND THE FINCHES COOKED EVERYONE BREAKFAST FOR THEIR LAST DAY.
ISN'T THAT A LOVELY SURPRISE?
OH, AND GRANDPA NEEDS TO TALK TO YOU, DARLING.
HE SAYS IT'S IMPORTANT.

Oh, no! I forgot to remind him about his medicine!
GRANDPA! IT'S TIME TO CHECK YOUR LEVELS!
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, KIDDO! THEY LOOK GREAT!
BEAUTIFUL MORNING, ISN'T IT?
A GREAT DAY FOR EXPLORING.
I SAID I WAS SORRY... YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHAME ME.
I WON'T GO BACK INTO THE WOODS.


NOW YOU STOP IT RIGHT THERE, YOUNG LADY.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE SORRY ABOUT.
I'M THE ONE WHO SCREWED UP.
I DON'T LIKE WHERE WE LEFT THINGS YESTERDAY.
WHO AM I TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN, AND CAN'T DO?
YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS. I TRUST YOU.
WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?
IF YOU WANT TO GO EXPLORE THE WOODS AND VISIT THE PINK TREE,
BY GOD, EXPLORE THE WOODS AND VISIT THE PINK TREE.
JUST BE CAREFUL.
I should be happy...
...the tenants are leaving.
Mom's in a good mood...
...Grandpa wants me to explore.
...I should be happy.

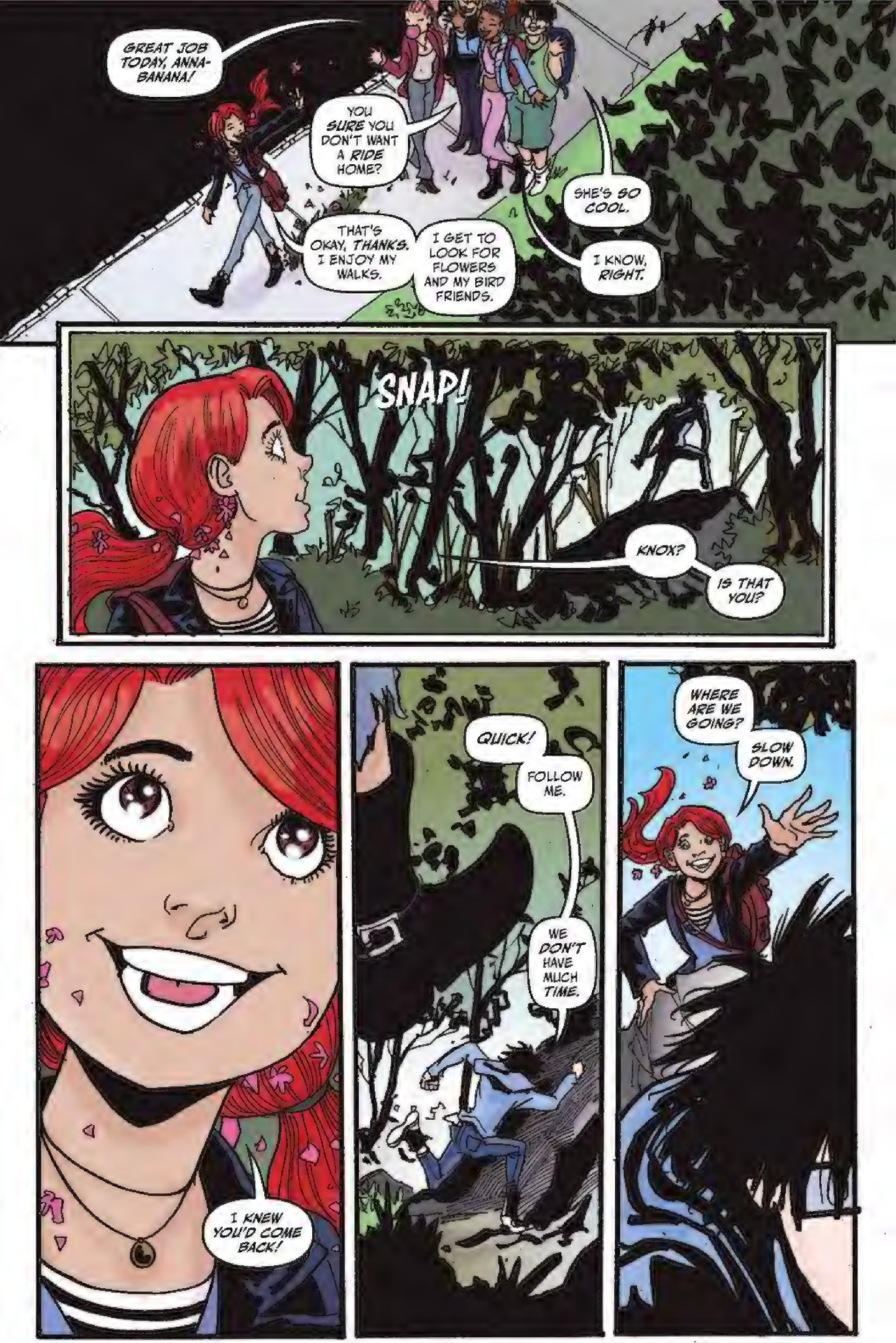
Something's off...
Have I done this before?
Is it déjà vu...
A glitchy memory?
The trucker... who robbed us... he...
No! That was just a dream!
Just then.
The smell of melted rubber and diesel fuel.
OH NO--!
The engine still runs.
The tires still spin.
I already know what happens next.

It's the trucker.
With all the stuff he stole from our house!
Just like my dream.
miya-weee!
miya-bad!
trucker-bad-bad!
AND YOU...
YOU DID THIS...
miya-eow.
tee-hee.
THIS CAN'T BE REAL...
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

TELL ME HE'S NOT DEAD.
TELL ME YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
miya-do?
doo-doo!
tee-hee!
THIS IS INSANE.
YOU ARE NOT REAL!
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
I JUST WANNA GO TO SCHOOL AND BE A NORMAL KID!!
HONK!
bye-bye.
tee-hee.
WAIT, ITTY-BITTY!
ANNA-BANNANA!
ARE YOU OKAY?

HOP IN, WE'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT.
WHY? SO YOU CAN TAUNT ME AND DUMP SODA IN MY BACK-PACK?
HARD PASS.
YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE LITTLE...
AND I ASKED YOU TO MARRY ME?
YOUR MOM SET UP AN ALTAR IN THE LIVING ROOM.
WE USED HAIR-TIES FOR RINGS.
WE WERE SO CLOSE.
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO... THINGS CHANGED.
WHY ARE YOU MESSING WITH ME, HEATHER?
I'M NOT.
I JUST MISS MY FRIEND.

BRIIIINNNG!!!
TODAY IS GOING TO BE SO AWESOME!
This is what you wanted...
...right?
Participation.
ANNA-BANANA! COME SIT WITH US!
YOU REMEMBER STACY, RIGHT?
WE HAVE ART TOGETHER. YOU ARE LIKE, SUCH A TALENTED ARTIST.
YOU SHOULD BE ON ETSY!
Popularity.
HEY, QUEENS!
OH-MI-GOD, ANNABETH, YOUR HAIR IS SO GORGE, I'M DYING.
I KNOW, RIGHT? DYING.
IT SMELLS LIKE PEACHES.
Prestige.
BRAVO!
WHOO!
ENCORE! READ IT AGAIN!
THAT WAS THE GREATEST ESSAY I'VE EVER HEARD!
...WITH THE TRANSFORMATION COMPLETE. THE BUTTERFLY FLEW AWAY. NEVER TO RETURN.
Peers.
YOU'RE A FREAKING GENIUS, GIRL!
OH, STOP IT.
TESLA... EINSTEIN... ANNA-BANANA.
Just let me enjoy this.


GREAT JOB TODAY, ANNA-BANANA!
YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT A RIDE HOME?
THAT'S OKAY, THANKS. I ENJOY MY WALKS.
I GET TO LOOK FOR FLOWERS AND MY BIRD FRIENDS.
SHE'S SO COOL.
I KNOW, RIGHT.
SNAP!
KNOX?
IS THAT YOU?
I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK!
QUICK!
FOLLOW ME.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
SLOW DOWN.

WILL YOU PLEASE JUST TALK TO ME?
ANYTHING SEEM A LITTLE OFF TODAY?!
HUMAN CURIOSITY IS QUITE THE CURSE.
YOU WERE WARNED NOT TO GO BACK TO THE PINK TREE!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THE HELL YOU'VE UNLEASHED?
WHY ARE YOU... SO MAD?
YOU'RE SCARING ME.
GOOD! YOU SHOULD BE TERRIFIED!
THE BLOOD OF BILLIONS IS ON YOUR HANDS.

KNOX?
DON'T. MOVE!
SNIIICCCK!
AAAHHHHHHHH!

WHAT IS THIS?
LET ME GO!
I CAN'T MOVE!
I CAN'T RISK IT, ANNABETH.
YOU'VE BEEN CHARMED...
DON'T TOUCH THAT! IT'S MINE!
THIS ISN'T YOUR FAULT.
IT DOESN'T BELONG IN THIS REALM.
I'M SORRY IT HAS TO END THIS WAY.

KNOOOOOOX!!!

DON'T LEAVE ME HERE!

BRING IT BACK!

PLEASE!

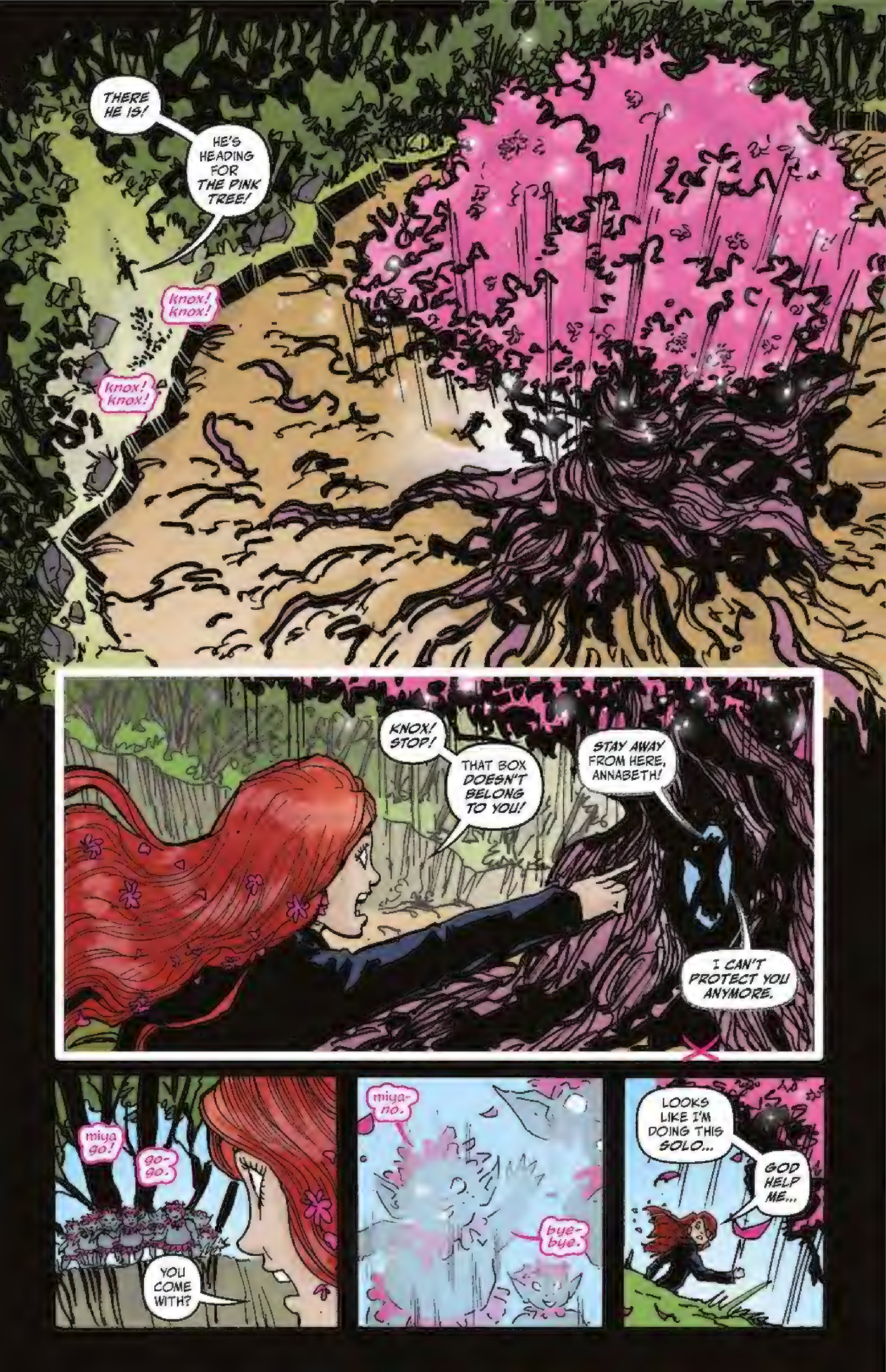
I NEED IT!

BRING IT BACK!

SOMEONE HELP ME!

HA HHHHHHHH!!!

miya-help?
Itty-bitty? Is that you?
OH MY GOD!
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!
YES, THAT'S IT -- UNTIE ME! HURRY!
WE HAVE TO FIND KNOX!
HE STOLE FROM ME!
miya-eow!
miya-knox!
knox! knox!
knox! knox!
HEY!
WAIT FOR ME!


THERE HE IS!
HE'S HEADING FOR THE PINK TREE!
knox! knox!
knox! knox!
KNOX! STOP!
THAT BOX DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU!
STAY AWAY FROM HERE, ANNABETH!
I CAN'T PROTECT YOU ANYMORE.
miya go!
go-go.
YOU COME WITH?
miya-no.
bye-bye.
LOOKS LIKE I'M DOING THIS SOLO...
GOD HELP ME...

HE HAD BETTER HOPE I DON'T FIND HIM!
BECAUSE WHEN I DO...
KNOX, ARE YOU IN THERE?!
HOW DEEP CAN THIS THING BE?
IT LOOKS LIKE IT GOES DOWN TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH.
Below.
Far below.
Where steam rises.
And Goblins lurk.
What is this place...?
It smells worse than Meeks' laundry...

AAHHHHHH!
The absence of light.
The shock of an empty vessel.
The horror of things to come.
SLURP
SLITHER
SLIFF
Death is not the end for this poor soul.
THE EYES LOOK AWAY!
THEY ARE BLINDED BY THE OPEN RELIC.
THE EYES LOOK AWAY!
WE MUST FORCE ONE OPEN, MY LORD.
WE MUST PROTECT THE RELIC.
KNOX?
WHAT RELIC...?
ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT... THE BOX?

KNOX? IS THAT YOU?
YEEEEESSSS, MY DEAR.
YOUR KNOX IS AN IMBECILE GOBLIN!
AHHHHHHH!
DOESN'T HE KNOW ONCE THE RELIC IS UNSEALED...
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO CONTAIN ITS CHARM?
LING!
LING!
HE'S HERE!
HE'S HERE!

WISH HIM AWAY!
WISH HIM AWAY!
DON'T LET HIM TOUCH YOUR SKIN!
DON'T LET HIM TOUCH YOUR SKIN!
KNOX! HELP ME!
HA-HA!
IS THIS YOUR WANT, CHILD?
TO BE RESCUED BY A GOBLIN?
YOU'RE TOO PATHETIC TO WILL THE RELIC.

WHOOOOSHHH!
SNAGGGGGK!
I WANT OUT OF HERE, RIGHT NOW!

THE EYE OPENS!
THE EYE OPENS!
WE MUST GO!
WE MUST GO NOW!
SPLOOOSHHH!!!

Somewhere *different.*
Somewhere *far away.*
Dazzling to the *eye.*
Beautiful to behold.
WHERE ARE WE?!
YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF THAT QUESTION!
THIS IS ALL YOUR DOING.
KEEP MOVING!
THE EYE CLOSES!

ARE YOU REALLY.. KNOX?
ARE YOU REALLY ANNABETH?
KNOX IS JUST ONE OF THE SKINS I WEAR.
BUT I AM STILL THE ONE YOU KNOW.
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, ANNABETH.
BUT THERE IS HOPE.
THERE IS HOPE.
THE RELIC'S CHARM IS WEAKENED HERE.
AT LEAST FOR NOW.
WHAT IS THE RELIC?
WHAT DID I DO?!
WHATEVER IT WAS... I DIDN'T MEAN TO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
PICTURE YOURSELF AT HOME.
YOU ARE JUST WAKING UP FROM A DEEP SLEEP.
HOLD IT IN YOUR MIND... JUST LIKE THAT.

KNOX, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
IT'S ALL JUST A DREAM, ANNABETH.
YOU CAN WAKE UP NOW...
BUT, IT FEELS SO... REAL.
And then...
Suddenly...
Nothingness...
KABOOOOM!
THIS WILL GIVE US TIME.
MANA TABI WILL DECIDE.
MANA TABI WILL DECIDE.

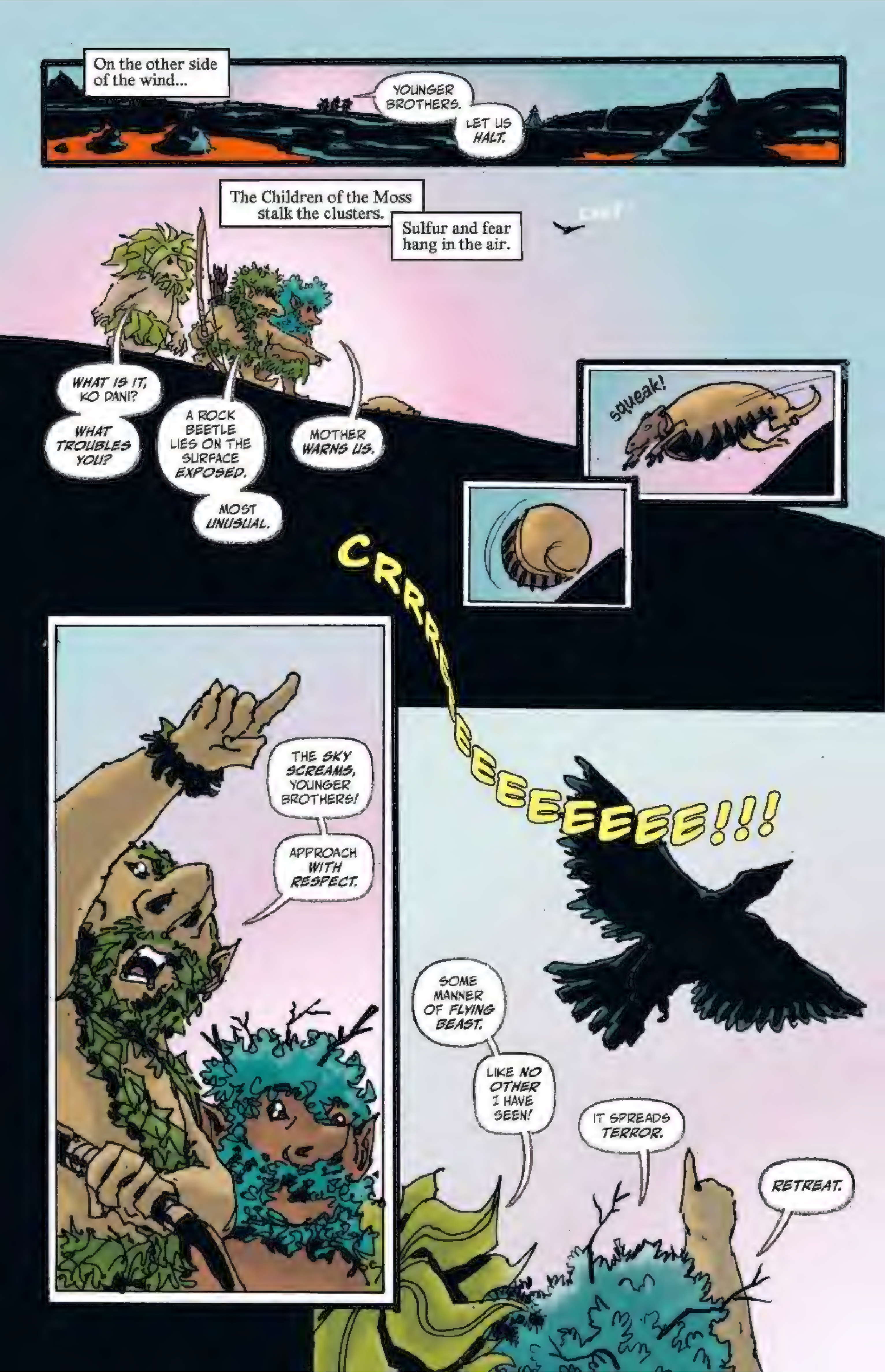
SIX

. . . They hunt their cherry-haired ***prey***.

Meanwhile, in the other realm...
THE SITO ATTACK!
THE SITO ATTACK!
NOBODY ESCAPES!
YES, GENERAL!
AS YOU COMMAND!
SUIFF!
THWACK!
DOOMED!
INCURSION!
INCURSION!
DOOMED!
EMPTY THE TOWER!
EMPTY THE TOWER!
THE ANCIENTS REMAIN IN THE TOWER.
THEY MOCK LING'S GLORY.
THE TALL ONE MUST BE WITH THEM.

YOU DEFY LING.
FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.
WHERE IS THE GOBLIN YOU CALL THE TALL ONE?
NO GOBLIN GOES BY THAT TITLE HERE, MY LORD.
SNORT
WE KNOW YOU PROTECT HIM!
WHERE DOES HE HIDE?
PEACEFUL COLONY.
PEACEFUL COLONY.
WE DO NOT FIGHT LING.
THE TALL ONE IS NOT HERE!
YOU GOBLINS.
TERRIBLE LIARS.

LING SEES ALL.
AND HE BELIEVES YOU.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND GRACE.
OH THANK YOU, MY LORD.
LING IS A MOST WISE RULER.
...BUT HE ALSO KNOWS YOU WERE PROTECTING HIM.
YOU LET HIM ESCAPE.
DESTROY THE TOWER!
TAKE COVER!
TAKE COVER!
MAY HE GUIDE US ALL!
LING IS LIGHT!
KA BOOOOM!
SPREAD WORD OF LING'S GLORY!
YOU WHO SURVIVE.
HOW MANY MORE WILL THE TALL ONE SACRIFICE TIL HE IS DELIVERED TO ME?


On the other side of the wind...
YOUNGER BROTHERS.
LET US HALT.
The Children of the Moss stalk the clusters.
Sulfur and fear hang in the air.
WHAT IS IT, KO DANI?
WHAT TROUBLES YOU?
A ROCK BEETLE LIES ON THE SURFACE EXPOSED.
MOST UNUSUAL.
MOTHER WARNS US.
squeak!
CRRREEEEEEEE!!!
THE SKY SCREAMS, YOUNGER BROTHERS!
APPROACH WITH RESPECT.
SOME MANNER OF FLYING BEAST.
LIKE NO OTHER I HAVE SEEN!
IT SPREADS TERROR.
RETREAT.

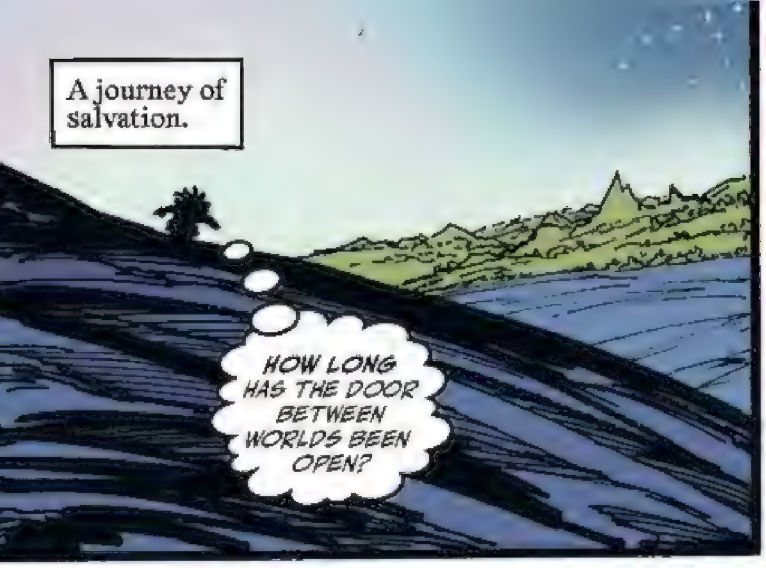
NO!
LET US MOVE FORWARD, WITH RESPECT.
SNAP!
THWICK!
SPLAT!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH A CREATURE.
WHAT IS IT? IS IT AN OMEN?
IT COULD SPREAD POISON.
WE SHOULD LET IT LIE.
IT DOES NOT COME FROM MOTHER.
LET US CARRY IT INTO TOWN.
WE CAN GET A FINE TRADE FOR SUCH AN EXOTIC BEAST.
WITH RESPECT, OLDER BROTHER.
MANA TABI SHOULD DECIDE.
AND SO IT SHALL BE, YOUNGER BROTHERS.
MANA TABI WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE SKY BEAST...
LET US MOVE FORWARD, WITH RESPECT.

BROTHERS.
ARE WE CERTAIN IT IS WISE TO BRING FORTH THIS SKY BEAST INTO OUR VILLAGE?
LOOK HOW OUR BROTHERS STARE.
THEY NEED US TO FEED AND PROTECT THEM.
AND WHAT DO WE BRING THEM?
UNCERTAINTY.
THIS MAKES US LOOK WEAK.
OLDER BROTHER, WITH RESPECT, THE FAMILY DECIDED TO SEEK MANA TABI'S WISDOM.
WHY MAKE THINGS WORSE?
LET THEM TAKE THEIR CHANCES.
NOT ON THIS, OLDER BROTHER.
MAY WE BE WISE!

STEP NO FURTHER.
WHERE DID YOU CAPTURE THAT SKY BEAST?
GREAT MANA TABI.
OUR ARROWS TOOK ITS LIGHT FROM THE SKY UPON THE CLUSTERS.
WERE YOU FOLLOWED HERE?
DID ANYONE SEE YOU BRING THIS TO OUR VILLAGE?
WE CAME STRAIGHT HERE, WISE ONE, TO SEEK YOUR WISDOM.
SUMMON THE ELDERS AT ONCE.

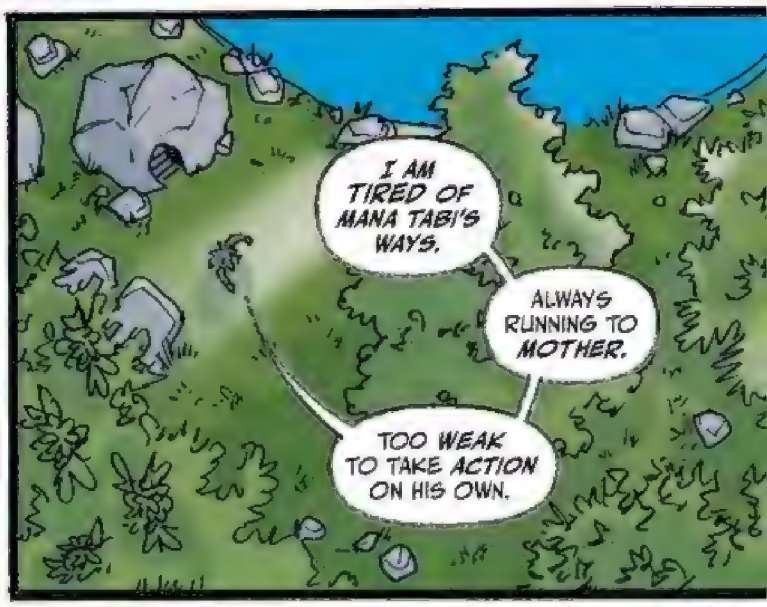
SILENCE, ALL.
HEAR ME, FOR I HAVE TROUBLING NEWS.
A DOOR BETWEEN WORLDS HAS OPENED NEAR OUR HOME.
IT HAS BROUGHT FORTH A SKY CREATURE FROM THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.
WE SHOULD MOVE!
WE SHOULD SEEK PROTECTION FROM THE ROCK PEOPLE!
WE SHOULD CLOSE OUR GATES. OUR VILLAGE CANNOT SUSTAIN A WAR!
I REQUIRE SILENCE!
OUR PATH REMAINS UNCLEAR.
I MUST SPEAK TO MOTHER.
SHE WILL TEACH US.
UNTIL THEN, WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO KEEP THIS FROM LING.
THIS IS MY WILL.

MADNESS!
LING SEES ALL!
STOP OLDER BROTHER!
WE MUST ACT NOW!
WE CAME TO YOU FOR WISDOM.
INSTEAD YOU DOOM US ALL!
BEING STUPID IS WHAT WILL KILL US, KO DANI!
SEE KO DANI TO THE SURFACE.
HE HAS BROUGHT SHAME ON HIS FAMILY.
NONSENSE! YOU ARE AN OLD FOOL!
ENOUGH! WHEN WE ACT, WE ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH MOTHER.
WE SHALL PLACE THE SKY BEAST IN MY HUT.
KEEP VIGILANT GUARD UNTIL I RETURN.
THIS IS MY WILL.


A journey of salvation.
HOW LONG HAS THE DOOR BETWEEN WORLDS BEEN OPEN?

A journey within.
UNHAND ME!
MANA TABI IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE EXPELLED!

COULD THIS BE THE SOURCE OF UNBALANCE I HAVE FELT?


I AM TIRED OF MANA TABI'S WAYS.
ALWAYS RUNNING TO MOTHER.
TOO WEAK TO TAKE ACTION ON HIS OWN.

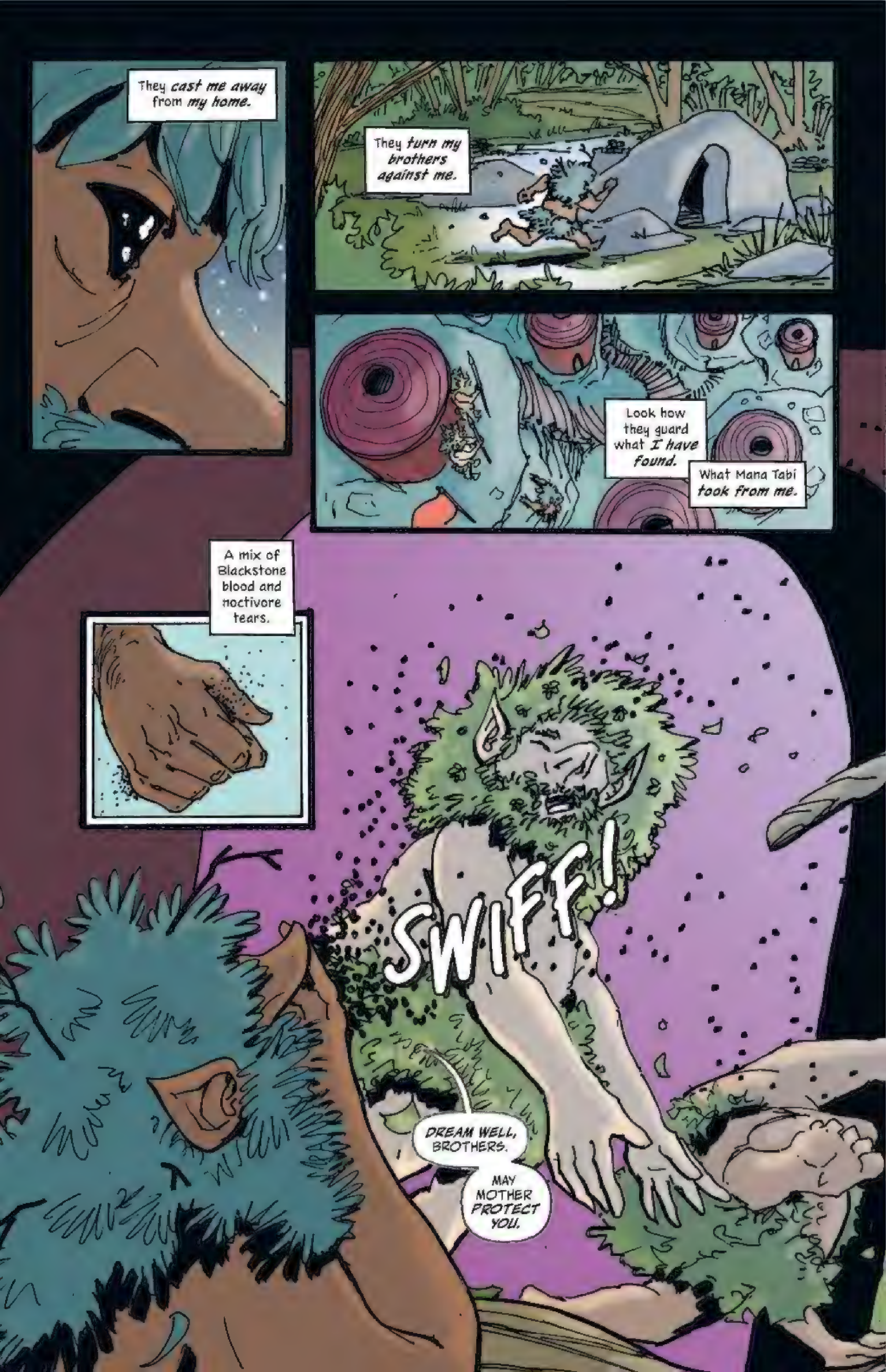
THERE MUST BE MEANING TO THE SKY BEAST FINDING ME.

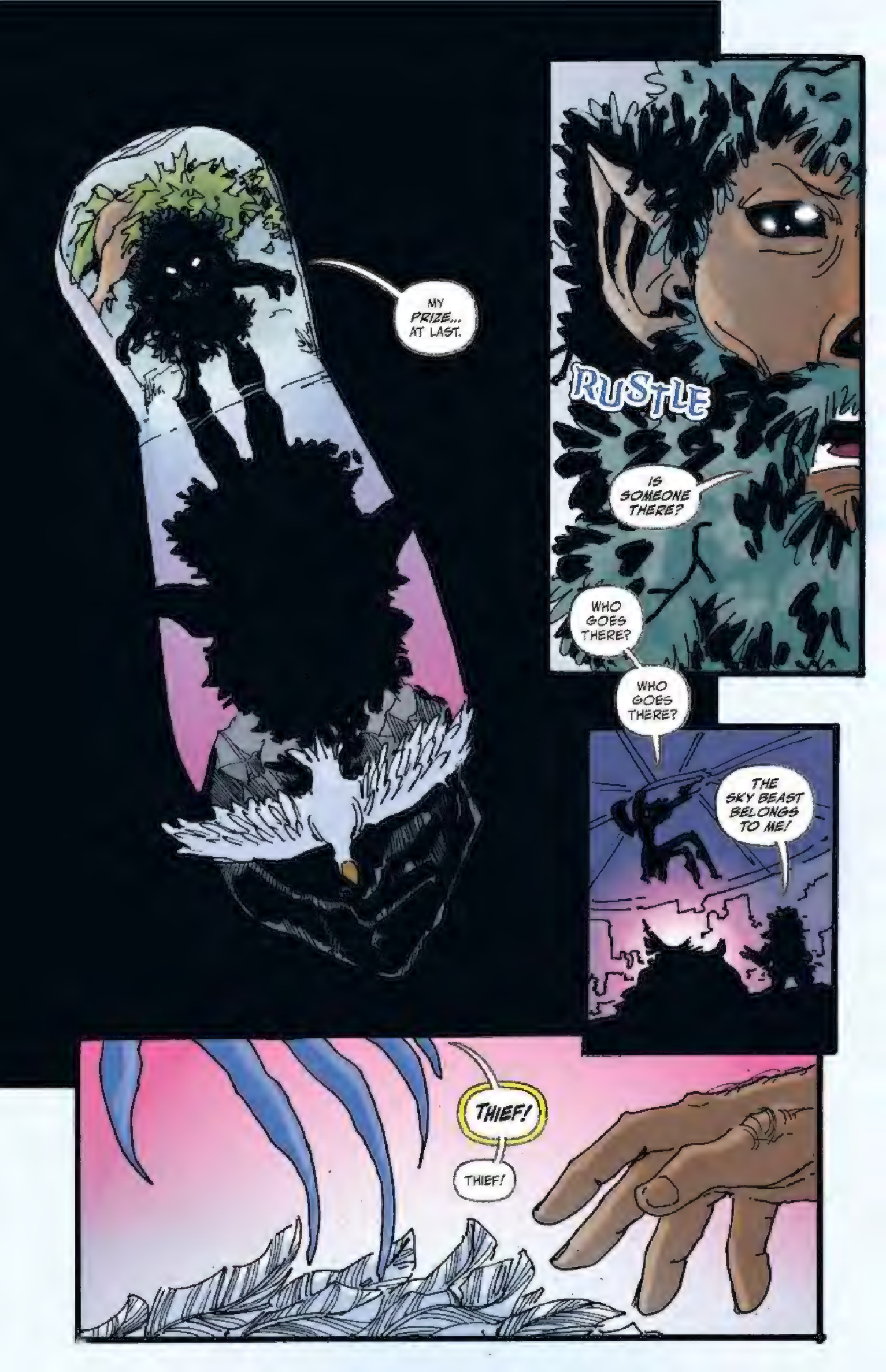
OUR PEOPLE LIVE IN FEAR OF LING!
MANA TABI IS A COWARD!

I PRAY FOR THE SAKE OF ALL REALMS THAT I AM NOT TOO LATE.

I WILL SHOW THAT OLD FOOL!

The wise one braves the clusters.
A place of fear and darkness.
In order to find the light.
Where the plates meet.
And the balance of the world is held.
All is possible here.
MOTHER... I HAVE RETURNED.


They cast me away from my home.
They turn my brothers against me.
Look how they guard what I have found.
What Mana Tabi took from me.
A mix of Blackstone blood and noctivore tears.
SWIFF!
DREAM WELL, BROTHERS.
MAY MOTHER PROTECT YOU.


MY PRIZE... AT LAST.
RUSTLE
IS SOMEONE THERE?
WHO GOES THERE?
WHO GOES THERE?
THE SKY BEAST BELONGS TO ME!
THIEF!
THIEF!

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.
THAT MAKES TWO OF US, GOBLIN.
OUR VILLAGE DOES NOT WELCOME YOUR KIND!
I AM A GUEST OF MANA TABI.
PERHAPS WE CAN MAKE A DEAL.
IF YOU LET ME TAKE THIS SKY BEAST.
I WON'T TELL THE VILLAGE MANA TABI HIDES A GOBLIN IN HIS HUT.
FAIR TRADE.
FAIR TRADE.
NOBODY IS HAPPY.

MANA TABI IS WRONG.
YOU DON'T RUN FROM FEAR.
YOU ENGAGE IT!
YOU EMBRACE IT!
SACRED MOTHER.
IF YOU THINK ME STRONG.
ALLOW ME THE STILLNESS TO SEE THE TRUTH.

The stones vibrate.
They share memories of things that were and things to come.
Goblins open eyes to other realms.
Ling's power grows.
A general rises.
Terror spreads.
OH NO...
KO DANI!

The Citadel.
LING COVERS ALL.
LET US MOVE FORWARD WITH RESPECT.

An outsider in the *Citadel*?
Ling *watches.*
His eyes are *everywhere.*
I must *stay strong.*
EXCUSE ME, BROTHERS.
I SEEK THE ONE THEY CALL *THE GENERAL.*
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.
TRY AT THE SPIRE.
This must be it.
Sito soldiers stand guard.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
I BRING *URGENT NEWS* FOR THE *GENERAL.*
IT CONCERNS... *THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.*
SEARCH HIM.
I MUST WARN THE OTHERS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

AN OUTSIDER APPROACHES.
BRING HIM TO ME.
YES, MY LORD.
SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, GENERAL.
THIS MOSS CHILD. IT CLAIMS TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.
HE WAS CARRYING THIS.
IT IS A GIFT.
I WISH TO MAKE A DEAL WITH HER EXCELLENCY.
I SEE...
SUCH A STRANGE-LOOKING BEAST.
HOW DID YOU COME BY IT?
PERHAPS YOU WERE HUNTING IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE?

NO. NEVER.

THE SKY BEAST WAS IN *OUR* LAND.

AN EYE OPENED NEAR OUR SETTLEMENT.

AND EXACTLY *WHAT LAND* IS YOUR CLAIM?

UHM, THE SWEET GUM RIVERS...

JUST *OUTSIDE THE CITADEL.*

PLEASE *FORGIVE ME,* MY LORD.

I MADE A *MISTAKE* COMING HERE.

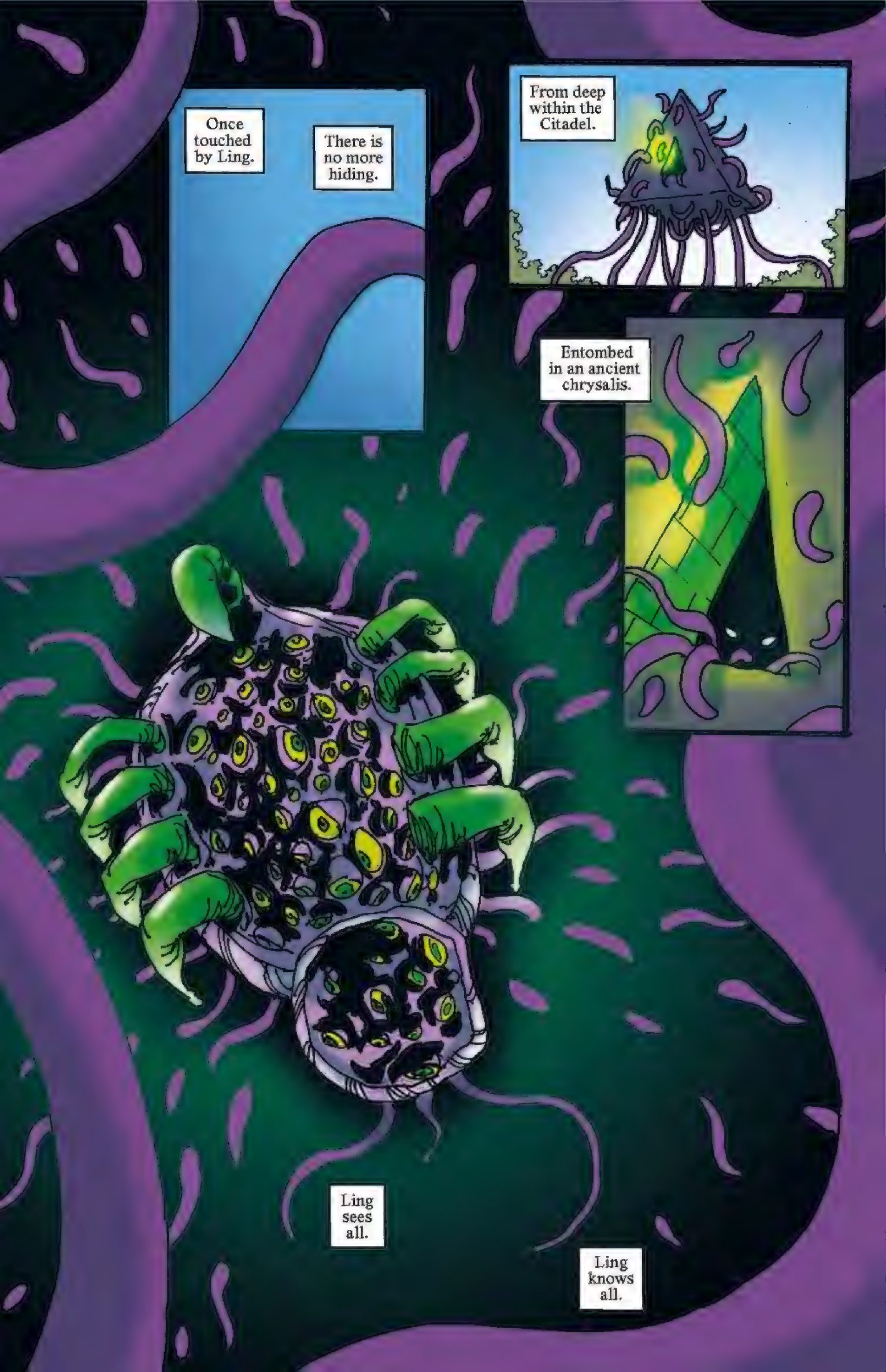
I FIND IT CURIOUS...

YOU *CLAIM* TO BE FROM SWEET GUM WHEN *BLACK STONE* COVERS YOU.

WHAT DO YOU PROTECT THERE?

THWACK!

THWACK!


Once touched by Ling.
There is no more hiding.
From deep within the Citadel.
Entombed in an ancient chrysalis.
Ling sees all.
Ling knows all.

IT'S USELESS TO FIGHT ME, KO DANI.
YOUR THOUGHTS ARE MINE NOW.
AH, YES... NOW I SEE.
YOUR VILLAGE HIDES THE TALL ONE!
IN A SECRET SETTLEMENT UNDER THE GLASS ROCK RIVER.
I SEE IT TOO, MY LORD.
YOU WILL TAKE US TO YOUR ILLEGAL VILLAGE, KO DANI.
AND YOU WILL DESTROY IT!
YES, MY LORD...
PREPARE A FIRE SQUAD.
WE ARE GOING TO BLACK-STONE.
NOBODY HIDES FROM LING.

Sacred Mother. Guide my steps.
Ko Dani's treachery has damned our people.
I beg of you, allow me time to warn them.
Oh, no...
I am too late.
THEIR SOULS.
HE'S EATING THEIR SOULS.
OH, WISE ONE.
OH, WISE ONE.

REGRET AND APOLOGY.
REGRET AND APOLOGY.
I SHOULD HAVE NEVER AGREED TO SHELTER YOU.
I AM NOW FOREVER BURDENED.
LING HAS MESMERIZED OUR PEOPLES, SLAUGHTERED THEM.
GUIDE US, GREAT ONE.
GUIDE US, GREAT ONE.
LET THEIR DEATHS NOT BE IN VAIN.
WE MUST RETURN THE RELIC TO MOTHER.
IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO END THIS WAR.
MY LORD...
THE TALL ONE HAS ESCAPED.
BUT HE MUST BE NEARBY.

His *relentless will* spreads.

There is *no realm that is safe.*

There is *no escaping...*

Ling knows *all...*

END BOOK ONE

To be continued ...

FROM PLOTS TO LAYOUTS TO INK

Although the title is *Frank Miller's Pandora*, this graphic novel (originally published as six individual issues) is the result of a collaboration between several creative people: Frank Miller, Anthony Maranville, Chris Silvestri, and Emma Kubert.

To get a sense of the team's process, here's a peek into the development of issues no. 3 and 4 (pages 77–130 in the graphic novel), beginning with the beat sheet Anthony and Chris wrote in consultation with Frank to describe the plot.

Excerpted from Anthony and Chris's Beat Sheet ▶

FRANK MILLER'S PANDORA
Chris Silvestri & Anthony Maranville - 2/07/22

37.) INT. ANNABETH'S ROOM (THE TOWER) - NIGHT

Annabeth lays out some leftover potato chips, blankets, and bowls of water for Bo and his family, who explore her room. They are like little puppies mixed with drunk old men. Climbing up book shelves, sniffing and putting stuff in their mouths they shouldn't and making a mess

Bo discovers the dead Tern and his face fills with sadness. Annabeth nods, **"I know. I'm sad too. Meeks did this..."** Before you know it, all of the cherubs are sad and watch Annabeth cover up the bird. **"We'll bury him in the morning... I need sleep."**

38.) INT. ANNABETH'S ROOM (THE TOWER) - LATER

Annabeth is passed out with the cherub creatures... the excitement of the day too much for her. Bo opens his eyes and climbs from the dresser drawer and waddles across her room to the bedroom door. In short order, all two dozen cherubs are awake and out the door.

PANDORA ISSUE FOUR: Page Breakdown

1) Annabeth awakens on the ground in front of the tree.
2) She notices little flowers around her and on the tree. She gets up and
3) Puts the box in her bag. The flowers are starting to pop out.
4) Revealed, little cute Cherub creature! Hahah!
5) She likes this little cherub. She picks it up
6) She cuddles it and puts it down.
7) She says she must leave, and starts to leave.
8) The cherubs follow her.
9) At her house, the cherubs are still there. She tells them to leave.
10) They give her sad eyes, and she says okay. They walk into the house.
11) They pass Meeks, and she warns them about him.
12) In Annabeth's room, they start playing with the stuff. Bo sees the Tern…
13) Annabeth is still upset about it. She lays out chips for them and goes to sleep.
14) The little cherubs, mischievously leave the room.
15) Meeks is sleeping in his room, Bo comes in.
16) Bo becomes sinister, and begins to absorb into Meeks.
17) The creatures scurry around, and Grandpa sees them, horrified.

Emma took that and created her own document: a page-by-page breakdown of the plot, where she listed what happens on each and every page! Then she created the layouts for an entire issue, one at a time.

Once Frank reviewed Emma's layouts, she drew the pages, and Frank reviewed those.

Excerpted from ◀ Emma's Breakdown

After that review, Anthony and Chris wrote the script (the dialogue and sound effects) while Emma colored the pages.

Then after Frank reviewed the script and colors, Pete Carlsson lettered the comic. When that was done, everyone read through a PDF of the completed comic. Any final edits got made, and then the comic pages were delivered to the printer!

◀ Emma's Layouts for Page 110

Beat Sheet
34.) EXT. MOUNTAIN WOODS - NIGHT

The creatures take an instant liking to Annabeth, mirroring her every movement. She smiles at their playfulness. She picks one up, BO, it coos and cuddles with her.

"Frank, Anthony, and Chris are creating such a **fantastically intricate** plot, so in order to enhance that sense of whimsy and darkness, I represent the story's ambience in the very beginning of the drawing process with my layouts.

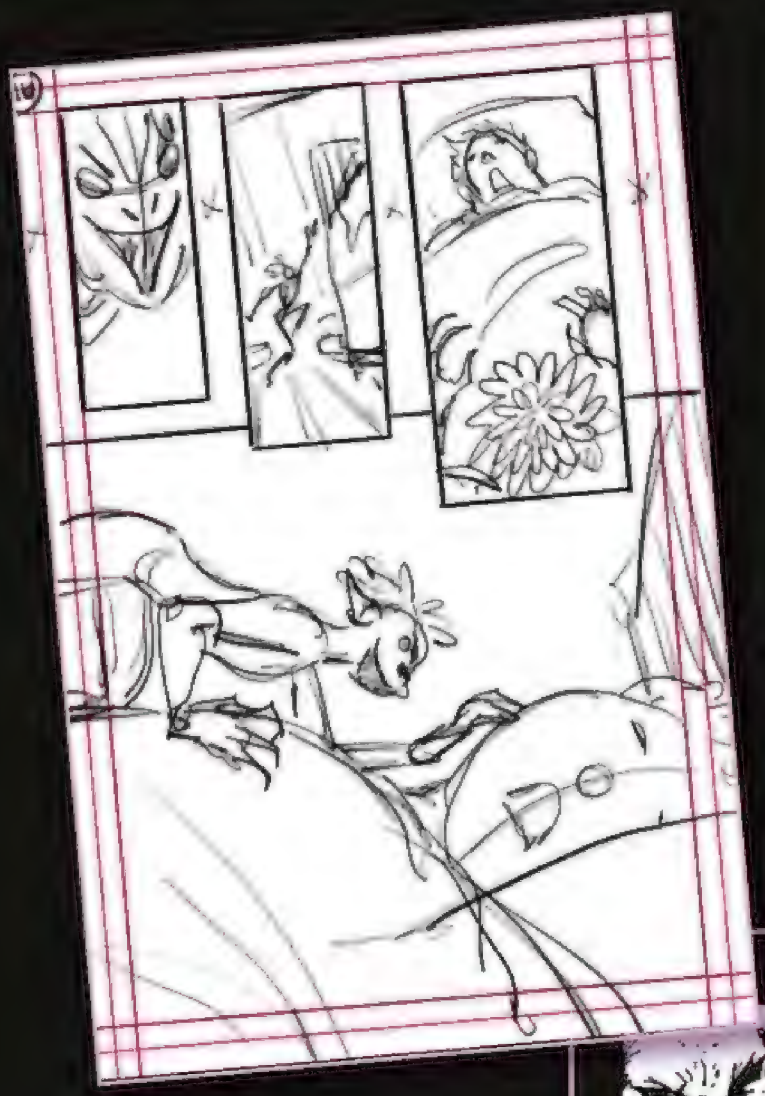
I always work **from the general to the detail**. I start by reading the plot and creating a page breakdown, and write what happens on each page with a simple sentence or phrase."

—EMMA KUBERT

PAGE BREAKDOWN

4) Revealed, little cute Cherub creature! Hahah!

Emma's Inks for Page 110 ▶



Beat Sheet
39.) INT. THE GOLD ROOM (MEEK'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Meeks is slumped in his bed, the empty bottle of cheap gin on his nightstand. His door creeks open as a sliver of light moves across the floor. A beat, then Bo appears in the doorway. Behind him, the other creatures waddle and toddle into other parts of the house...

Bo climbs on top of Meeks, who opens his bleary and bloodshot eyes. Still in a drunken stupor.

◀ Emma's Layouts for Page 122

"Once I've found the flow of the entire issue, I break it down even further into panels to convey the detail of each moment that is visually necessary to the story.

It's one of my favorite ways to work in comics because it gives me the **creative freedom** to tailor the project to exactly what we want it to be: a whimsically twisted fairy tale shrouded in darkness, mystery, and magic."

—EMMA KUBERT

PAGE BREAKDOWN

15) Meeks is sleeping in his room, Bo comes in.

Emma's Inks for Page 122 ▶

◀ Emma's Layouts for Page 123

Beat Sheet
39.) INT. THE GOLD ROOM (MEEK'S ROOM) - NIGHT continued

Bo's demeanor shifts to something sinister as its eyes roll back and its mouth gapes open.

Then, shockingly... it absorbs him, turning into a gruesome amalgamation of the two beings in the process. It feeds on his life force, fusing with his DNA... taking over his body!

PAGE BREAKDOWN

16) Bo becomes sinister, and begins to absorb into Meeks

Emma's Inks for Page 123 ▶

Emma's Layouts to Inks for Page 83

Emma's Layouts to Inks for Page 89

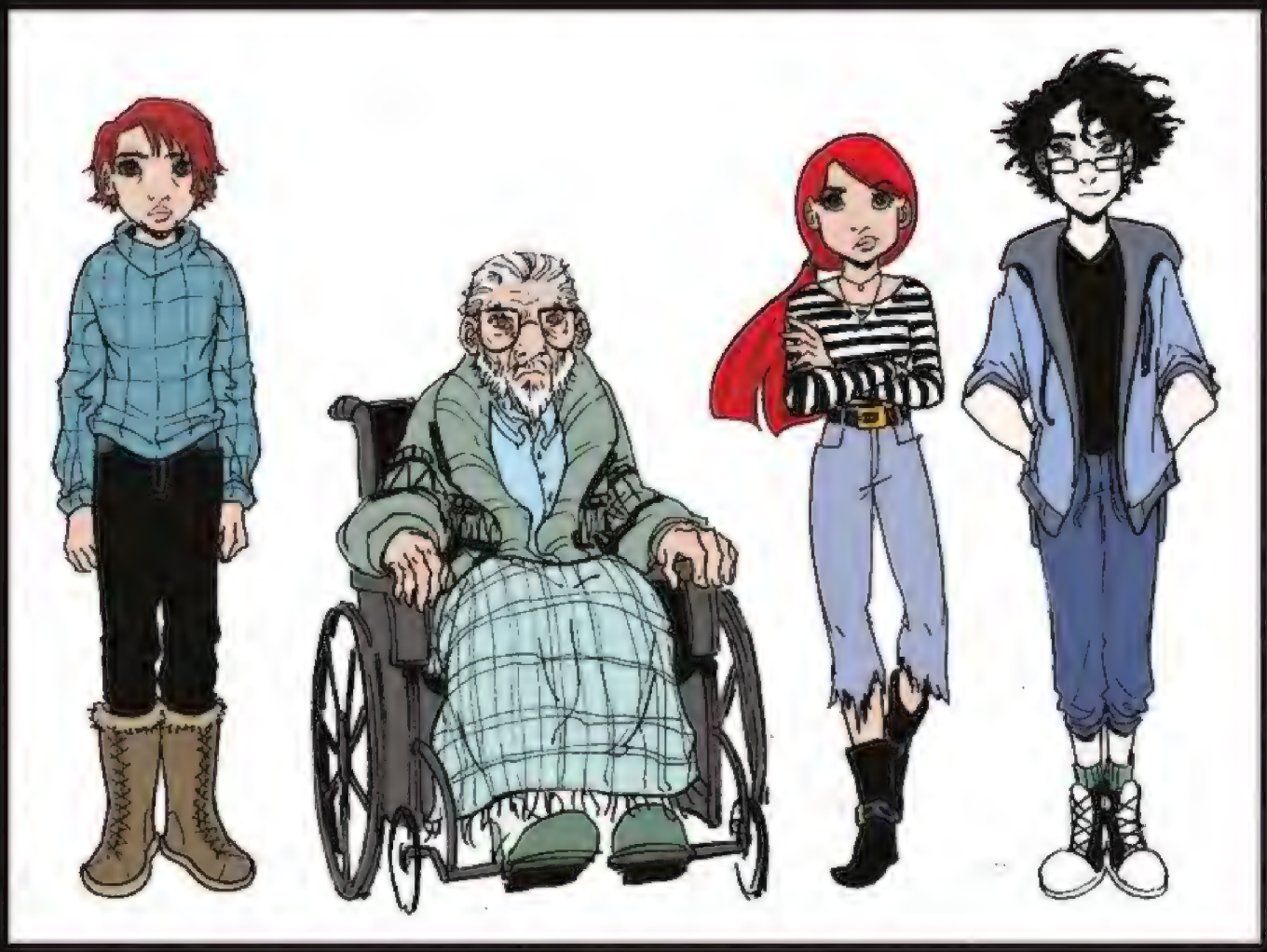
"I approached the storytelling of *Pandora* by combining three concepts; referencing the great Frank Miller's amazing storytelling and use of blacks, finding inspiration in classic fairy tales and old pen and ink drawings, and adding a little spark of myself in there. When going from layouts to inks, it's really important to me to capture a sense of spontaneity and movement from panel to panel, page to page, issue to issue. I want the world of *Pandora* to feel alive, like it's about to jump right off the page and suck you right into it. Anyone who reads this story knows that they are a part of this world, too, and anything can happen within it."

—EMMA KUBERT

Emma's Layouts to Inks for Page 98–99

FRANK MILLER'S

PANDORA CONCEPT ART



FRANK MILLER'S

PANDORA: BOOK 1
VARIANT COVERS

▲ Issue no. 1 Variant Cover by Frank Miller

▲ Issue no. 2 Variant Cover by Frank Miller

▲ Issue no. 3 Variant Cover by Theresa Kubert

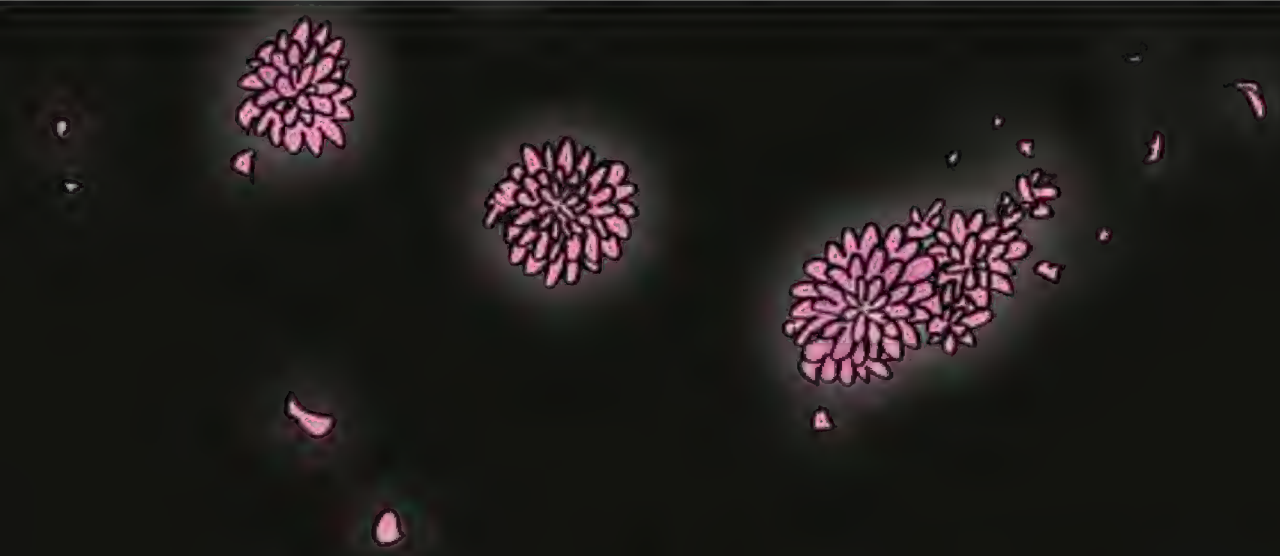
◀ Issue no. 4 Variant Cover by Anthony Marques

◀ Issue no. 5 Variant Cover
by Theresa Kubert

Issue no. 6 Variant Cover
by Andy Kubert ▶

COMING SOON

Issue no. 7



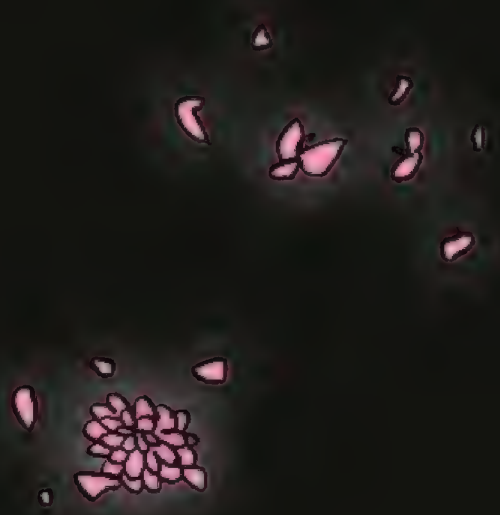
FRANK MILLER is regarded as one of the most influential and prominent creators in the comic book industry today. Celebrated for his intense, hard-boiled storytelling and gritty noir aesthetic across comics, novels, and film, he is best known for such works as 300, *Ronin*, the *Sin City* series, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, and *Batman: Year One*, among others. He has received numerous awards, including two Harvey Awards for Best Graphic Album of Original Work in 1998 and Best Continuing Series in 1996; and six Eisner Awards, including those for Best Writer/Artist, Best Graphic Novel Reprint, Best Cartoonist, Best Cover Artist, Best Limited Series, and Best Short Story. In 2015, Miller was inducted into the Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame for his lifetime of contributions to the industry.

EMMA KUBERT is a freelance comic book artist, writer, co-creator, penciler, and colorist of Image Comics' *Inkblot* series, and graduate of the Kubert School. She is the daughter of Marvel cover artist Andy Kubert and granddaughter of industry icon Joe Kubert.

ANTHONY MARANVILLE is a television writer who has previously written for the Emmy, Saturn, and GLAAD Award–winning *Star Trek: Discovery* and the Emmy Award–nominated *Star Trek: Short Treks* episode "Ephraim and DOT." He also directed the award-winning documentary *Mimi Vang Olsen: Pet Portraitist*.

CHRIS SILVESTRI is an award-winning television writer who has worked on shows such as *Star Trek: Discovery*, NBC's *Hannibal*, Netflix's *Brainchild*, and *Star Trek: Short Treks*. He also co-wrote *Hide or Seek*, a graphic novel with Dan DiDio and Anthony Maranville.

PETE CARLSSON wears many hats: art director, graphic designer, production manager, letterer, editor, and colorist. He got his start in comics almost thirty years ago working with Joe Kubert at the Kubert School. Today, he freelances with multiple publishers and creators on numerous comics and graphic novels. Pete designed a book called *Young Men in Love*, published by A Wave Blue World, which won Outstanding Original Graphic Novel Anthology at the 2023 GLAAD Media Awards! You can find him in Ithaca, New York, with his family and dogs.



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Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for
and may be obtained from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-4197-7723-3
eISBN 979-8-88707-430-6

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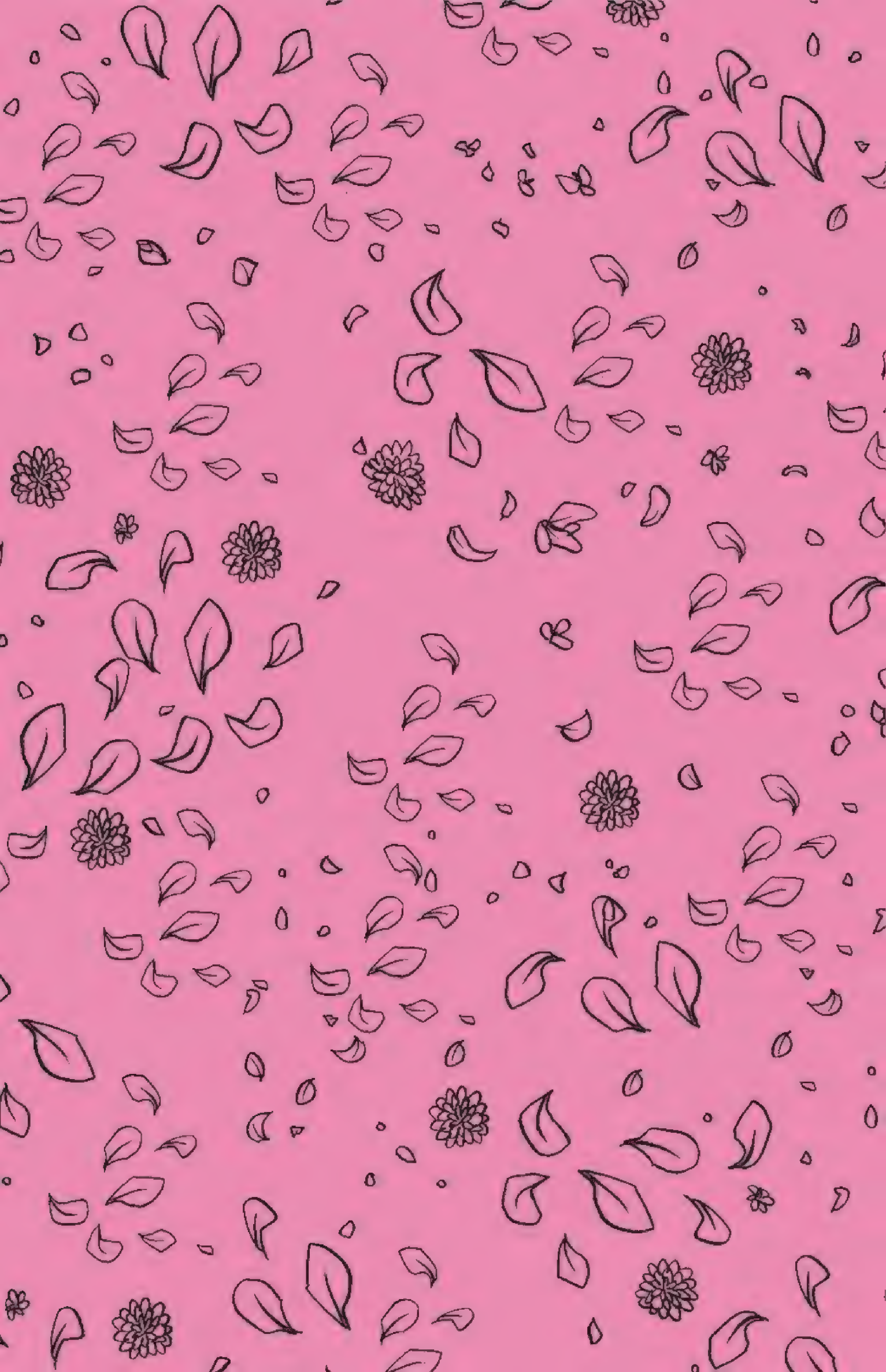

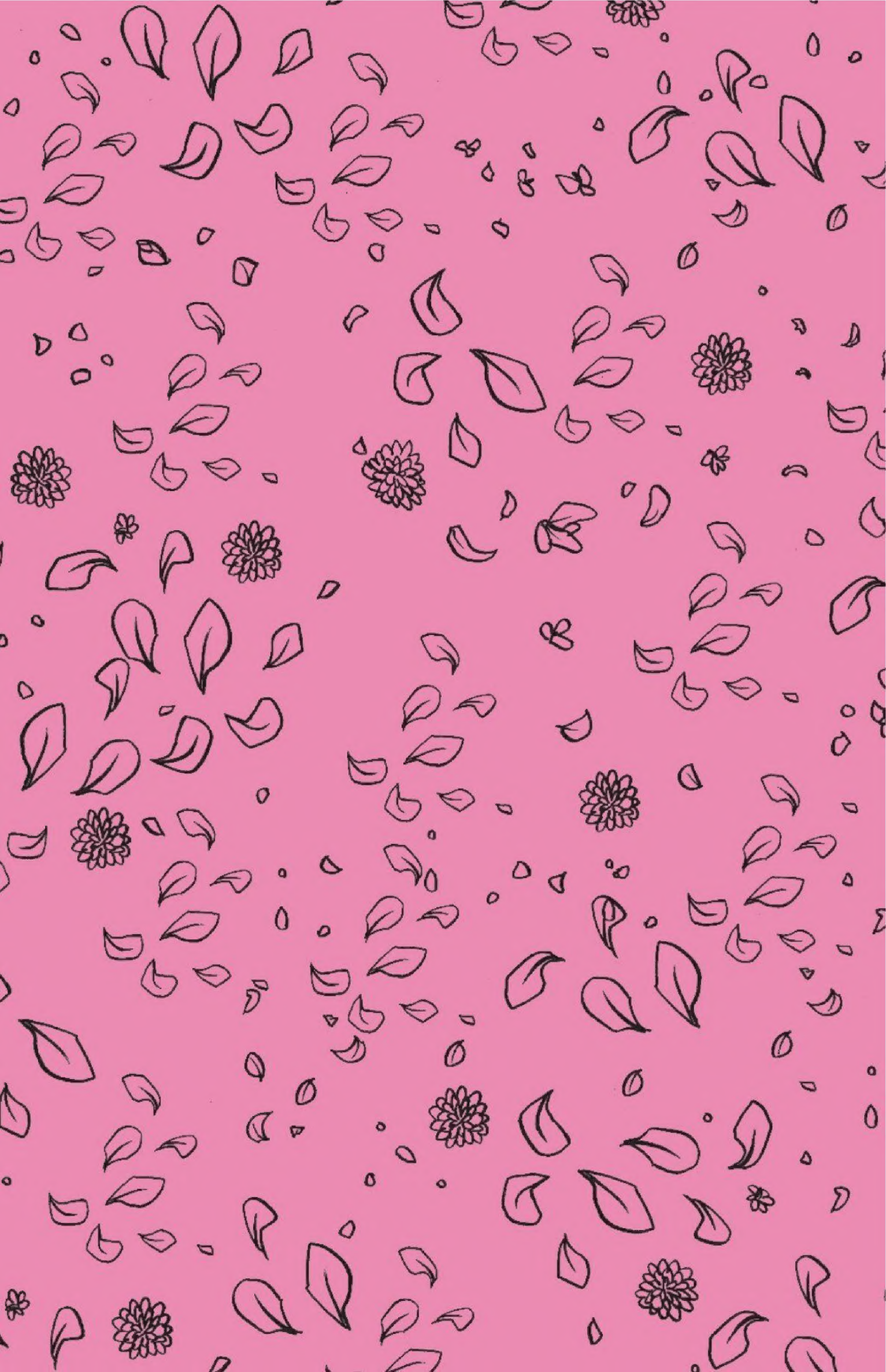

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